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### The angler's companion to the rivers and



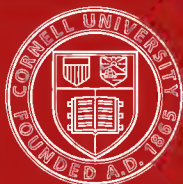
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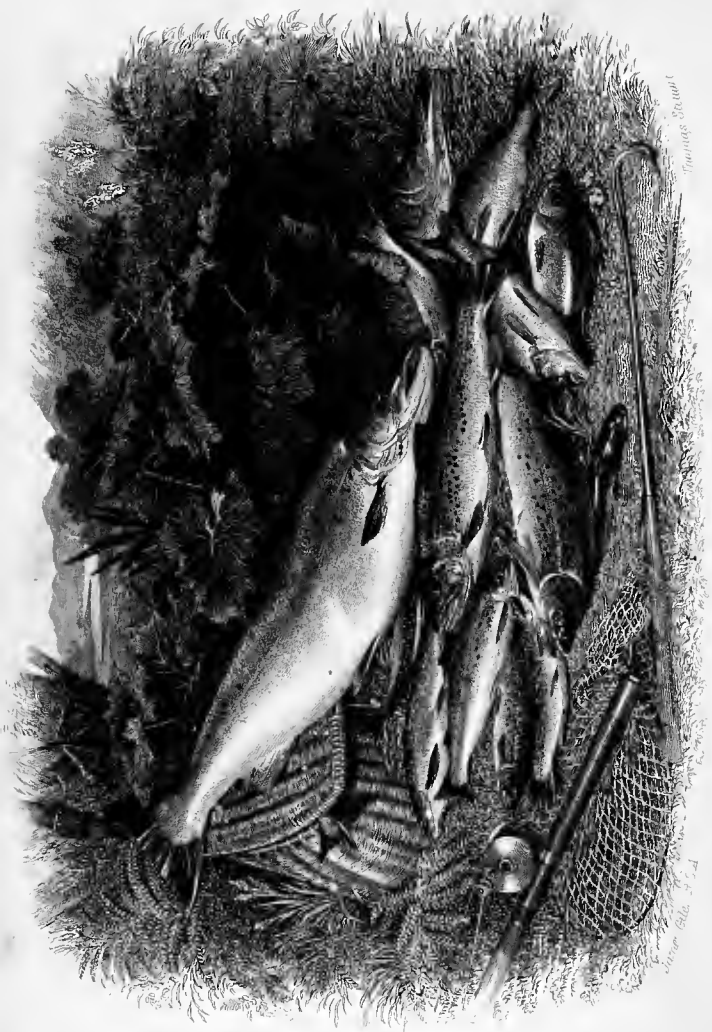


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THE  
ANGLER'S COMPANION  
TO THE RIVERS AND LOCHS  
OF SCOTLAND

BY  
THOMAS TOD STODDART

SECOND EDITION

WILLIAM BLACKWOOD AND SONS  
EDINBURGH AND LONDON  
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TO  
JOHN WILSON, JUN., ESQ.,

*This Volume is Inscribed,*

AS A MARK OF REGARD, AND IN COMMEMORATION OF  
OUR MANY WANDERINGS TOGETHER  
BY LOCH AND STREAM,  
ON THE MOUNTAINS AND IN THE VALLEYS OF  
OUR FATHERLAND,  
BY HIS SINCERE FRIEND,  
THE AUTHOR.





## ADVERTISEMENT TO THE SECOND EDITION.

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THE present edition of the *Angler's Companion* has been subjected to a thorough and careful revision. In many portions of the treatise the author has thought it necessary to make extensive alterations. With those chapters which relate to the practice of the art, he has dealt as an increase of experience suggested to him ; unhesitatingly, when required, applying the pruning-knife, or reinforcing them in turn with new and useful matter. To the remainder of the volume — that part in which the Rivers and Lochs of Scotland in their angling qualifications are treated of—he has also paid particular attention, using every endeavour to render the information contained in it not only interesting, but of fresh date and unimpeachable correctness. As regards the waters of the north and north-west coasts of Sutherland, which are now, since 1850, let solely as rod-fishings, minute information, collected from the best sources, is embodied for the first time. The list of angling streams and lochs throughout Scotland, and of flies adapted for them, has also been considerably augmented, and much additional matter relative to the Scottish Salmon-Fishings, along with suggestions for their improvement, will be found scattered throughout the volume.

KELSO, *March 6, 1853.*



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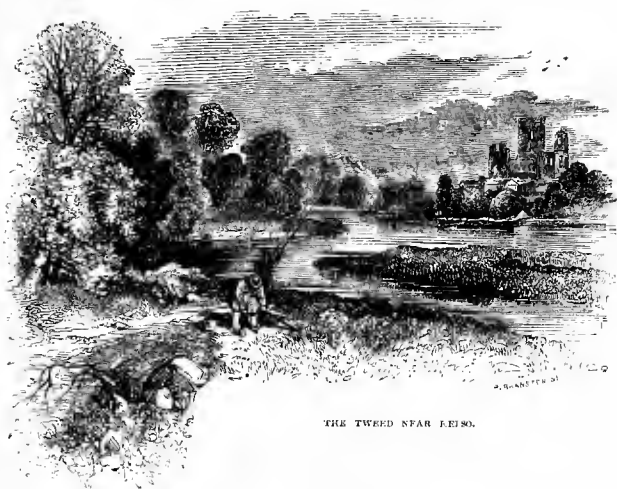
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THE TWEED NEAR KEISO.

## INTRODUCTION.

THERE is no river in Great Britain which affords so many facilities to the angler, for the pursuit of his art, as the far-famed Border stream. Taken in connection with its tributaries, it includes a range of water sufficient, throughout the season, to engage the skill and assiduity of thousands of the gentle craft; and this it does, without giving occasion for a single dispute, on the ground of interference with his sport, to any one individual of the whole number. Extending upwards of one hundred miles, the Tweed itself furnishes sufficient elbow-room for the daily plying of at least

twice that number of rods; and when I include along with it the Ettrick and its twin sister Yarrow, the Gala, Leader, Teviot, Till, and Whitadder, not to mention the streams of the upper valleys, and the countless rivulets swarming with trout, from which one and all are supplied, I have expressed in the above statement no overdrawn estimate of the resources, in point of amusement, which this river comprehends.

Of all our Scottish waters, from its fountain-head to the sea, Tweed is unquestionably the most amply stocked with river-trout; it is frequented also, throughout the greater part of the year, by different species of the migratory *salmonidæ*—the *salar*, the *eriox*, and *salmo albus*: these distribute themselves, on their ascent from the ocean, over a large proportion of the main river; they occupy, for a long course of miles, its pools and shelter-places; at certain seasons, they push up in great numbers into the smaller feeders; and although, to the wandering brother of the angle, not always affording the same measure of successful sport that he meets with on some of our Highland streams, yet their presence and taking humour are more to be relied on, they continue haunting the fresh water throughout a much longer period of the year, and are more independent of rains and temperature, while, by their distribution over a large extent of current, they yield, what is the case on few of our northern rivers, abundance of exciting recreation for a whole host of salmon-slayers.

But while such are the general features of Tweed as an angling river, its individual superiority in this respect will be more clearly exemplified, when I limit



my observations to the particular portion of its course which, extending five or six miles upwards, and as many in an opposite direction from Kelso, may be said to lie in the vicinity of that town. In this stretch of water are embraced, unquestionably, some of the finest salmon-casts, as far as rod-fishing is concerned, in Great Britain. Spring, summer, autumn, and winter all furnish their fresh-run supply of the scaly tribe. The clean, firm-set, eye-delighting fish of March and April is succeeded, during June and July, by the whitlings and early grilises; these again, throughout the remainder of the season, are followed by others of older growth intermingled with breeders of every description; while, to crown all, the "grey schule," cleaving undauntedly the December torrent, brings up the rear: nor is it until they have escaped the perils of the net and coble, and found their way through the arches of Coldstream bridge, that these—the migratory fish of Tweed,—discover much appetite for the baits of the angler, or seem inclined to come, right venturesomely, towards his tinselled lures. Here it is, in the stretch of water alluded to, that they most freely exercise their capricious tastes, and here they are found in more abundance and perfection than in the upper portions of the river.

Nor, while Tweed, in the vicinity of Kelso, excels as a salmon-stream, is it less famed as affording, along with its tributaries, Teviot and Eden, the choicest of sport to those preferring the humbler but not less delightful branch of the art—trout-fishing. There, at all seasons, and in all varieties of ways, has the angler an opportunity of showing his address. He is not, as on some of our northern rivers, liable to

become surfeited with an over-abundance of rapacious and unwary fish, or tired with the uniformity in point of size and appearance which these present to his eye; on the contrary, he has to deal, as befits him, face to face, with craft and caprice;—while there is this, moreover, to excite and interest him in the pursuit, that there are ever and anon hovering, within cast of his line, trout which, on being hooked, will not submit without a struggle, and, when captured, cannot fail to call up those feelings of exultation which none but anglers comprehend.

A long residence on Tweedside, and in the neighbourhood of the town alluded to, together with the further experience of two or three seasons on the banks of salmon-streams in the north of Scotland, have naturally enough, since the publication of my *Scottish Angler* in 1835, contributed in a large measure to deepen my acquaintance with the practice of the art. During the whole of this period I have pursued it with a measure of enthusiasm little inferior to that which actuated my boyish years; and were I to relate instances in order to prove my attachment to river-side recreations, I should only excite the wonder of many “grave and reverend seigniors,” who draw their life and enjoyment from very different, but, by me, unenvied sources.

Located on Tweedside, I have had, besides those already mentioned, various facilities afforded me for bettering my information on points connected with rod-fishing. I have been brought, for instance, much into contact with able and intelligent craftsmen—have listened to the exposition of their notions as regards the tastes and habits of fish, the attractive

nature of such and such a lure, as well as the advantage to be derived from this or that form of tackle. The opportunity also has often presented itself of witnessing their feats and good fortune ; and I have frequently, with the solemn delight of a child, drank in the wondrous exploits of some river-enchanter—credulous while I listened, and willing, in spite of reason, to be credulous still.

Surrounded with these advantages, and encouraged by the solicitations of numerous friends, I have ventured to throw together the following chapters. They involve, all of them, plain matter-of-fact subjects, which are dealt with in a corresponding style. I have avoided, as much as possible, dressing them up for favour, expunging, where it could be done consistently, whatever savoured of the superfluous ; and although impelled, now and then, to embellish my remarks with a dash of the ideal, I have resolutely disclaimed its assistance in the relation of all matters of fact and experience.

The first portion of the volume is taken up principally with what relates to river-trout, and the various methods of capturing them, as pursued on Tweedside and elsewhere. My treatment of this subject I have not allowed to interfere, except in a corrective and elucidatory form, with what lies embodied in my former treatise. The views presently under submission are the result of more extended practice and enlarged information. They present, it is true, little or no claim to originality ; but, as the cullings of yesterday, from a new field of experience, may possess, perhaps, freshness enough in their details to attract and interest the angling enthusiast.

On the subject of trouting with the fly, as well as the method of dressing fly-hooks, I have dwelt briefly and generally. So many treatises have been written upon these matters, that no room remains for their further exposition; and when I behold the catalogue replete with entomological science, which forms the *sine quâ non* of the modern angler's pocket-book, I shrink to confess my own unpardonable ignorance in regard to them. On the practice of worm-fishing in clear waters, minnow and parr-tail spinning, the employment of the salmon-roe as a bait, &c., I have entered into circumstantial details. The two first-mentioned branches of the art are considered by all anglers of experience to rank as highly as the pursuit of the fly-fisher. They are certainly, although a degree more troublesome, as exciting; and they require, even under the most favourable circumstances, a greater exercise of skill and judgment in order to command success.

With respect to that chapter which comprehends the natural history of the salmon, I have in the present edition thought it proper to steer clear, in a great measure, of questions of controversy, and submit myself, although on certain points with some degree of reserve, to the opinions and discoveries of experimental science. The subject is one which has lately excited much study and attention; but I am not, on this account, prepared to say that the history of the salmon stands free of all obscurity. Its marine habits, the food it partakes of, the wanderings it indulges in during its ocean sojournings, remain as yet matters of pure speculation.

In that portion of the volume which treats of sal-

mon-fishing, I have drawn out lists of the most approved flies for our Scottish rivers, especially Tweed. These have been extended by me considerably beyond what, to my own idea, forms, in point of material, an efficient stock or variety, under ordinary circumstances; and my inducement to swell the number further than what seems absolutely requisite, has proceeded simply from a wish to include every favourite and tried hook. In selecting the fly-stock described in these lists, I have received considerable assistance from various quarters; and, indeed, throughout the remaining chapters of the volume, and much of the foregoing matter, I stand indebted to the friendly aids and suggestions of more than one intelligent angler.

But while drawing liberally upon the oral communications of others, and from those sources which my own experience has opened up, I have not neglected the sinewing of a large portion of my work with details and quotations from written authorities. In doing this, however, I have taken especial care to avoid pressing heavily upon the original matter of the volume, or interlarding it with extracts which, although confessedly to the point, are not in critical demand. The great bulk of these details has been taken from statistical sources, and stands incorporated in the concluding chapters of the work. It consists, indeed, of facts, already recorded, which are at the service and within reach of every one who has leisure and inclination to seek out and arrange them. This portion of my task I have found to be more laborious than I at first anticipated; but the principal difficulty lay, not in the mere collecting of materials, but in con-

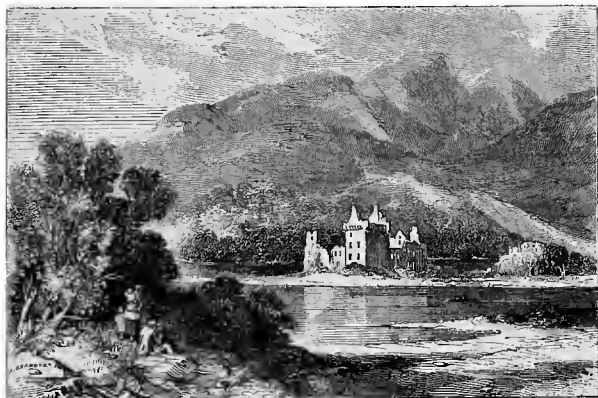
densing and putting these together, so as to form a summary of correct and useful information.

I have endeavoured, in this portion of the volume, to give an accurate account of our first-class rivers and their tributaries, embodying, to the best of my knowledge, all that relates to their salmon-fishings in the way of produce, rental, &c. Along with these matters I have comprehended, as respects Tweed, a detail of the various salmon-casts and stretches of water reserved chiefly for rod-fishing. To specify and describe, in a similar manner, the numerous trouting-streams and lakes with which Scotland is intersected, would be quite superfluous. I have, accordingly, in regard to them, selected for special observation a few of the most productive, those particularly where large trout are to be found ; at the same time, I have attempted, in a general way, to describe the angling qualifications of others less noted, arranging the whole according to the districts of country where they flow or are situated. In regard to the county of Sutherland, where the rivers are at present solely devoted to angling purposes, and where the best rod-fishing for salmon in Scotland can be obtained on reasonable terms, I have taken pains to embody the most correct and newest information. The concluding chapters, also, will be found to embrace the names of those places where the angler may expect to meet with good or tolerable accommodation.

I feel it unnecessary to add anything further in the shape of introductory matter. What remains to be done is to discharge simply an act of duty. It is to express my acknowledgments to more than one individual for the encouragement as well as assistance I



have received while penning these pages. This means of excitement withheld, I should have ventured to the task with a much greater measure of diffidence than has been cherished by me throughout its performance. There are many, I feel assured, on Tweedside, more qualified to have engaged in it than myself—many, at least, not less enthusiastic, and who have attained, as anglers, to a much higher degree of excellence. I have been bold enough to take possession of their vantage-ground—inconsiderate enough, it may be said, to unfold some of the secrets of their proficiency; but it shall not be added, that, in doing so, I have neglected to tender my acknowledgments, and give expression to my obligations.



LCCH AWE.



# THE ANGLER'S COMPANION

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## CHAPTER I.

### THE FRESH-WATER TROUT.

WHAT is a river, a Scottish river, without its trout? What is the ocean without its navies? What are the heavens without their stars? There is scarcely a scene or landscape, in Highlands or Lowlands, with which this fish is not in some measure associated. Climb yonder hill, and gaze around and before you. See there an earl's proud mansion, his parks and pleasure-grounds. See there trees of twice a century's growth,

“ Whose very shadows  
Are histories on which to legislate ;  
The veteran boughs are hung with oracles  
And legendary song.”

But mark ! seemingly at your feet, the life-blood of the picture, a broad, shining, rejoicing river ! Gaze in turn up along the valley : yonder, as if from a huge cavern in the distance, you behold it issuing ; you catch with your eye the gleam of its progress ; now, at the base of a green ascent or sheep-walk ; further on, amid pastures and corn-fields ; now, skirting a forest ; now forming, as it were, the moat of a tower or castle ; and, again, at yonder point, gathering in fresh tribute from a silvery stream. How it progresses ! like the everlasting march of a king—music at every step—homage and increase at

every turn. See, now it winds onward below us. The sward freshens where it flows; the flowers are more varied and abundant. It laves the walls of a town. It glides under a bridge of many arches. It pursues far on, far as the eye can stretch, its radiant and welcome course.

And this river, one of the noblest of our streams, would it be the same—would it be equally endeared to us anglers,—were it a fishless, unpeopled water, devoid of the “mottled par,” the star-sided trout, the glittering salmon? What a blank, dreary aspect it would have, unassociated with these! What chasms there would be in the mind and memory—in the forethought and expectation of the beholder! Not the landscape, not the lore, not the minstrelsy, not the warble of birds, not the chiming of the sunlit river itself, could fill them up. Unpeopled! desolate! The fortunes of a thousand rills are woven here. The dew of the mountain, the overflow of the lake, the upwelling of the spring, the boon of the cloud, have met and are mingled in this one great artery. Its material is life, its flow is life, its sound life; the shadows that fleet over it are all life, and yet—imagine it, ye that can—it is an unpeopled river. No anglers’ festivals are held here; no fisher moves along the bank; no wily nets are cast across the pool; no torch-light reveals the secrets of its channels. It is an unpeopled river! The salmon is a stranger to its fords and strongholds; the water-fly sports unharmed on its surface; the otter refuses to frequent it; the heron over its own shadow languishes and dies.

Visionary! there is no such stream in broad Scotland. The chemist’s art, the bleach-field, the paper-mill, the railway, acids and vitriol, gases, lime, sheep-washing, manures, and machinery combined, have not yet produced this result as respects a single rivulet. Our very mill-runs still contain trout—our lakes and rivers abound in the scaly tribe. Ramble with me from shire to shire, and I warrant thou wilt cull from each a measure of sport, ample enough to satisfy a man of moderate wishes. Art thou otherwise, I have no key to thy humour; in these times, alas! of exclusion and selfishness, I have no power to assist thee. But there are trout enough for all, for the sport of the peasant as well as that of the peer; and a malison seize the churl who would grudge to the labouring man his

snatch of pleasure, or deny him, although obtained through his own skill and industry, the morsel that economises or adds life-prolonging zest to his homely and every-day fare.

Unquestionably, there exists no species of fish, which, judging of it by the external marks, holds claim to so many varieties as the common fresh-water trout. In Scotland, almost every lake, river, and streamlet possesses a breed peculiar, in outward appearance, to itself. To prove and illustrate this, I do not require to go farther than the district in which I reside. Within a circle of about twenty miles from Kelso, I find embraced the following streams and rivulets:—Tweed, Teviot, Ettrick, Leader, Ale, Jed, Kale, Eden, Blackadder, Whitadder, Leet, Coquet, Till, Colledge, Bowmont, Gala, Rule, all trouting waters; yet, strange to say, there is not one of the whole number but lays claim, as far as regards the point of distinction in question, to its own variety of trout; and this is the more remarkable, that, with the exception of Coquet, all the streams I have mentioned have connection with the Tweed, or ultimately contribute to it.

To describe, within reasonable compass, the marks and features which characterise and distinguish each of these varieties is utterly impossible; and the task, happily, is not required. They consist, generally speaking, in the size, number, disposition, and colours of the beads or spots; in the formation of the head and tail; in the shape and proportions of the fish; its tendency to become thick, deep, or round; to fatten, or remain lank; in the tints also, changeable as seasons and even states of water will render them, which most frequently pervade the skin. Nor, in fact, is it to be wondered at, when we consider the almost infinite number of changes which even the size, disposition, number, and colours of the beads alone will effect in the external appearance of the trout, that the breeds or varieties thus judged of should baffle all power of computation.

But in regard to the waters above mentioned, (and I have omitted none, within the limits assigned, of any note,) the trout peculiar to each are distinguished, not merely by their external features, but by another point of character as well; to judge of which, in relation to so many different streams, may be esteemed a matter of some difficulty. I allude to their edible qualities, the flavour and degree of

curd and richness they possess, when in season. Now, in regard to this feature or point of character, I can safely affirm that it is almost as varied as the outward marks which distinguish the fish of one river from those of another. I make this observation, not merely upon my own judgment, although I have exercised it oftener than once, as regards the produce of all of the streams in question ; but I do so on the authority of others, and there are many such, who can attest as to the truth of what I have stated. In Kelso itself, there is scarcely an inhabitant but what can at once, by the exercise of his palate and organs of taste alone, distinguish betwixt a Tweed, a Teviot, and an Eden trout, or the produce of the main river and its two tributaries that flow in the vicinity of the town. Externally, the legitimate breed of each is unmistakably marked, (there occur, I allow, mixed varieties or crosses, frequenting in common all the three waters, and the presence of which may be accounted for in various ways ;) but, more than this, the very colour and consistence of the flesh when cooked, the flavour and richness it exhibits, are all severally unlike. The true Eden trout, for instance, is a deeply-shaped fish, small-headed, and of dark complexion on the exterior. The stars or beads are by no means numerous, but they are large and distinctly formed ; those on either flank being of a deep crimson or purple hue, and encircled with a whitish ring or halo. Its flesh, when in season, on being cooked, is of a fine pink colour ; the flakes interlayered with rich curd. At the table, it is highly esteemed for its firmness and general excellence.

The Teviot trout, externally, is a more beautiful fish than that of the Eden. The back is finely curved, and the head small. It wants depth, but possesses considerable breadth of form. The spots, which are large; stand well out, and engage the eye. They are generally of a purple colour, inclining to crimson. A fine gold or orange tint pervades the exterior of the fish, which, towards the belly, fades away into pearly whiteness. In its edible qualities, the Teviot trout is certainly somewhat inferior to that of Eden. When beyond half-a-pound in weight, it cuts red and possesses considerable richness of taste. What are caught in the lower parts of the river, from Oxnam downwards, are much superior, both in size and flavour, to those

taken higher up ; and I have noticed that in certain pools, they are firmer and better shaped than in others.

As regards the proper Tweed trout, it is quite easily distinguished from those of Teviot and Eden. The general shape of this variety is by no means faulty. Its head, except in the case of overgrown individuals, or such as are found in the rocky parts of the river, is moderate-sized. Its paunch alone has the appearance of being out of proportion to the rest of the body. This receptacle is capable of holding a large quantity of food, and is usually met with much distended, or in a loose flabby state.

In Tweed, the cross breeds are very numerous, and they all, in some degree, grow to partake of the peculiarity I mention. The true stock, however, is easily distinguished. It inhabits the river from its very sources, as far down, I may say, as Norham. The cross breeds, on the other hand, are severally, according to their varieties, found in the neighbourhood of such tributaries as contribute to their production : for instance, in the Tweed below where Teviot discharges itself, trout are frequently met with which unite the characteristics belonging to the fish of both rivers.

The trout of Tweed—I allude to the pure *bonâ fide* breed—is plentifully decorated with stars or spots. Of these, the most attractive are of a vivid crimson hue. The general colour or outward complexion of the fish is yellow ; its back having an olive, frequently a grey shade or tint. In its edible qualities, it is much inferior to an Eden or Teviot trout, and unless cooked shortly after being taken, becomes soft and curdless. It is, however, when in season, quite sweet and palatable, and in some parts of the river, where there is good feeding-ground, acquires a considerable degree of richness.

I have described the trout of these three streams, all running within a short distance of each other, in order to exemplify the existing varieties of the species in question. The most careful investigation of the subject has led me to conclude that every lake, river, or streamlet, possesses its peculiar breed of trout ; and all I shall do to draw further regard to this fact, is to mention, in general terms, a few additional localities where it has fallen most strikingly under my own observation. I take the neighbour-

hood of St Mary's Loch, in Selkirkshire. The loch itself is contiguous to that of the Lowes, and united with it by a small run, not a hundred yards in length. The two sheets of water contain distinctly-marked varieties of trout. Of streams connected with these lakes, there are the Chapelhope and Corsecleugh burns, the Summerhope burn, the Meggat water, with its tributary Winterhope burn; Yarrow, with its feeders; Douglas burn and Altrive lake,—every individual water possessing its own peculiar breed of fish. Extend the range to Ettrick, and the same observation holds good. The main stream, the Back burn, Faa-hope burn, Rankle burn, Timah, &c., all have their own varieties. Go to Dumfriesshire, to Loch Skene, Moffat water, the Annan, the Esk, the Liddle, and the case is exactly similar. Ascend the rivers of Perthshire—the Tay, the Earn, the Almond, the Isla, the Tummel, and the Garry; or its smaller streams, such as May, Ruchil, Erochty: visit Lochs Tay, Earn, Tummel, Freuchie, Broom, Turret, and Laggan; pass on to Lochs Awe, Ness, and Garry, or retire, still northward, to the rivers Conan and Blackwater, Brora, Inver and Thurso; to Lochs Luichart, Ledgowan, Garve, Achilty, Shin, Assynt, Stack, Loyal, Watten, and you will find in every individual range of water mentioned, its own peculiar breed, or variety of the *fario*.

In entering into the above details, it may be asked what purpose I have in view; or, in other words, does the fact of there being such numerous varieties of the fresh-water trout assist in forming any conclusions beneficial to science? I leave this to be judged of and considered by others better adapted for the task than I am. One or two observations, however, I venture to make relative to the varieties in question; and first, I hold that trout, on being transferred, whether by accident or otherwise, from their parent stream or lake to another range of water, rapidly undergo a great change; one, however, that does not affect their external marks or embellishments, which features I therefore regard as best denoting the breed or variety.

For instance, the trout of Teviot carried accidentally into Tweed, lose, in fact, after a few weeks, many of those distinctive points which the superior feeding of the first-mentioned stream afforded them. They lose their redness of flesh, their strength, liveliness, &c.; but in no case can



it be proved that the change has so affected their outward appearance as to alter the character and arrangement of the stars or maculæ. These they retain as the indices of their origin; and they are as essentially theirs in this character, as are its spots the distinctive property of the leopard. With regard to the general colour or complexion of the fish, that is quite another matter. Nothing is so readily operated upon, even within the precincts of its own parent stream, as the skin of the trout, in relation to colours. In this respect, it is like that of the chameleon. During a top-flood, when the river is clayed or thick, and fish are only to be captured by the pout, hand-net, or some such contrivance, they present a white, I might almost say sickly, look. On the water becoming brown or porter-coloured, they assume a fine yellow, healthy, and inviting appearance; and on its recurring to the ordinary size, they are again transformed, and partake of a complexion agreeing to that of the stream itself. The character of their retreats also, the nature of the stones or banks they lurk under, influence, not unfrequently, the general complexion I speak of, and sometimes lend a parti-coloured appearance to the fish, quite independent, however, of its fixed decorations in the shape of stars, &c.

I have stated that fresh-water trout, on being transferred from the parent stream to another range of water, are capable of undergoing great changes. To what extent these, in any instance, will take place, must depend upon the nature of the transference. I have mentioned very cursorily the effect upon a Teviot trout when shifted to Tweed; but, in respect to such a case, the transference is far from being violent. Besides the relation that exists betwixt the two rivers, as the tributary and its recipient, there are other accommodating circumstances which prevent the occurrence of any great change in the size, appearance, and flavour of the trout. For instance, the action and qualities, nay, in some measure, the feeding capacities of Teviot, become diffused on its junction through Tweed; then there is the similarity of climate; the fact, also, that both rivers abound in trout of a similar size—all of which circumstances operate as I have stated.

In order, therefore, better to illustrate my position, I shall assume the transference to be one of more violent

character. I shall take the produce of a small stream, say up to the number of four or five dozen trout. The breed or variety inhabiting this stream, I shall suppose, seldom attain the length of nine inches, or weigh more than half-a-pound ; as food, they are of inferior quality ; in point of shape, they offer nothing attractive. These individuals I transfer to a pond, or lake, hitherto devoid of fish, and occupying a space of several acres. Its soil or bottom I shall suppose to be composed of marl, or some such feeding substance. It is provided with ample shelter, and every requisite that can encourage the growth of trout. Well, what will be the effect of this change upon the character of the fish in question ? It will not alter the setting or arrangement of their stars or distinguishing marks ; but it will, and that most materially, improve, in a short space of time, their size, shape, and edible qualities. A single season itself would, in all probability, suffice to fatten them up to thrice the weight which it was possible for these trout to attain to in their own native stream. They will acquire more seemly and captivating proportions, and derive, from liberal and luxurious feeding, a corresponding richness of flavour and firmness of flake. That these latter results are frequently accompanied by a heightening of the internal colour—a change from its pristine whiteness to pink or red, I do not deny. Where there is shell marl, or abundance of insect food, this transmutation is likely to occur ; but it is by no means, even under these circumstances, an infallible result of the transference. I am acquainted with a natural sheet of water, forty or fifty acres in extent, and stocked, as I have described, from a small streamlet, or hill burn, where, while the trout acquired large dimensions, and improved both in shape and flavour, they still retained the original white colour. Nor is redness in the flesh always an indication of superiority, as respects the edible qualities of the fish. I have partaken at table of trout distinguished for their high colour, and yet, in point of taste, they were soft, rank, and mud-flavoured ; while, on the other hand, I have met with white-fleshed trout, firm, curdy, and good.

In regard to this matter of redness, peculiar to the flesh of salmon, trout, and charr, I am led more naturally to refer to it in a future chapter : it is, therefore, at present,

quite unnecessary to expatiate on the subject. Nor, in renewing my remarks relative to the transference of trout from one range of water to another, need I multiply instances. What has already fallen from me will suffice to bring out and illustrate some points in the natural history of the fish hitherto unrecorded. Their astonishing variety, every lake and river possessing its own distinct breed — the effect of change of circumstances on their appearance — the chameleon-like transitions in point of hue, undergone by them during a flood, and while it continues to abate—their shape, growth, and edible characteristics, have all cursorily been brought under view.

Of the food and habits of the trout, however, I have said comparatively little ; nor have I called direct attention, while treating of their varieties, to what may be termed the cross breeds, in contradistinction to the true or original breed, peculiar to each stream or lake. This last-mentioned subject I shall dismiss with a very few observations ; and, first of all, I may notice, that the cross breeds to which I refer are simply those which have their origin in varieties of the common trout (*fario*) brought into contact with each other at the breeding season, and do not implicate the questionable produce, or mule breed, arising from any hap-hazard connection betwixt the *fario* and bull-trout, or whitling ; a connection altogether discountenanced by nature, and not likely to take place. I may also remark that, although cross varieties may, for a season, or term of seasons, rival in number the true breed belonging to this or that stream, and threaten to extirpate it altogether, yet there is no fear or likelihood of such a result ; the peculiar nature and qualities of the water, aided by the remaining original stock, always tending to reinstate the breed.

Thus, for instance, it has happened in the case of the upper part of Eden, above Stichel Linn, where, owing to the accidental escape of considerable quantities of another variety of trout from enclosed water at Mellerstain, the stream itself became the haunt, and continued so for three or four successive years, of a cross breed, which vied in numbers with the proper stock, and appeared, during the greater part of this period, as if it would ultimately supplant them altogether. This breed, however, and its after-

crosses, have nearly disappeared, and the original trout are resuming, in point of numbers, their old position—I cannot add in point of size. In this respect there is a marked falling off, attributable, no doubt, to drainage and various agricultural improvements, which have been carried on at the sources and along the banks of the stream.

The trout is unquestionably a voracious feeder. It consumes, in proportion to its size, a greater quantity of sustenance than other fresh-water fish; nor, in respect to the quality of its food, is it quite so scrupulous as is generally imagined. Look, for instance, at the variety it indulges in, according as the seasons, hours of the day, and state of the water or atmosphere prompt and direct it. In this variety are embraced the whole of the insect tribes, winged or otherwise—frogs, leeches, worms, slugs, snails, maggots, cad-bait, every sort and size of fly, beetle, and moth, the water-spider, &c. Then there are fish—the smaller ones of its own species, parr or fingerlings, minnows, loaches and sticklebacks, along with the roe or ova of salmon; and I doubt not even young birds and water-rats are occasionally made prey of by hungry river-trout. Examine the stomach, and you will generally find a large mass composed of insect-remains in a partly digested state, and superadded sometimes to these, the remnants of a parr, loach, or minnow. The carp, the tench, the perch, are not more ravenous or varied in their feeding than the common fresh-water trout. Even the pike itself, although a fearless, vindictive, and rapacious fish, is less gluttonous in its habits, and in its tastes infinitely more simple and congruous.

What is it then, it may be asked, that renders the trout difficult of capture? Its greedy propensities, one might imagine, would naturally allow little room to the angler for the exercise of skill and judgment. But experience has taught otherwise, and the simple reason of this is, that, with these propensities, the trout unites epicure habits, caprice in its hours and seasons of feeding, cunning, shyness, and watchful distrust. As an epicure, it battens one day upon surface or winged food, and the next upon ground sustenance. Sometimes the minnow will attract it, sometimes the worm; sometimes, turning from both with dislike or satiety, it will amuse its palate with delicacies of

the minutest description—the larvæ of water-insects or pellets of ova, picked up with address and assiduity from among the interstices of rocks and stones, from the foliage or roots of water-plants, or while floating past it in the descending current. And this caprice as to its food, while it tests the skill and experience of the angler, is assisted in doing so by the cunning and natural mistrust of the fish ; its quick vigilant eye ; its keen distinguishing sense of smell, and similar instinctive endowments and perceptions.

The wariness and caution observable in trout frequenting certain localities are often, in fact, the result of circumstances, and indicate the existence of memory and other reflecting powers. It is not necessary, however, that a trout be pricked with the hook, in order to give so uncommon a degree of acuteness to its faculties, and render it more than ordinarily circumspect ; the circumstance of its being frequently disturbed by the apparition of an insect clumsily imitated, or tackle of any other description, will of itself produce this effect. The disposition, also, of light and shadow near its haunt, the description and quantity of sustenance yielded within its feeding range, all subserve to create or banish distrust, to add to its wariness, or lull its suspicions. On the other hand, the pricking of the hook, unaccompanied by any exposure of the angler's contrivance wherewith the pricking was effected, will often fail to excite alarm.

I could relate, were it necessary, many occurrences, met with from time to time, which prove that trout, although pricked, and actually retaining the hook in their lip or jaw, are not necessarily excited to distrust or suspicion, or thereby, through the continued irritation, deterred from feeding. Such instances, however, although frequently met with, are not to be held as hostile to my prior statement, that the river-trout is of shy, cunning, and capricious habits ; that it is a fish wary and vigilant, possessed of much natural discernment and strong instincts. They only show how circumstances will render these defensive qualities of little or no avail ; and how, on certain occasions, its very instincts endanger their possessor.

I am not possessed of any authentic information with regard to the greatest size attainable by the *fario*, or what is erroneously termed the parr-trout. The largest indivi-

duals are undoubtedly to be found in our lochs, where they batten most securely and luxuriously. There is one fact, however, to be urged in respect to the size of the trout, namely, that it depends entirely upon the quantity and quality of food yielded to it, whether from channel or surface, and not upon the age of the fish. The range of water, also, is a matter to be taken into consideration in connection with its growth; for, let a single trout be planted in a spring well, and tamed to such a degree as to take its food from one supplying it regularly and abundantly, still it will not increase much, if at all, in weight; and this is owing solely to the circumstance of its being confined, and not at liberty to choose its aliment according to the caprice of the moment: whereas in localities where the food varies with the seasons, and where there is choice at all times, and room for exercising it without challenge or interruption, trout will grow rapidly, and to a great size.

In all lochs characterised by good feeding-ground and abundance of shelter, trout have a tendency to acquire large dimensions. This tendency, however, is frequently counteracted by the breeding accommodation in the shape of streams or feeders, which afford great facility for spawning. Under such circumstances, the stock, instead of attaining to great size, become numerous, as is the case in many of our lochs, where the feeding-grounds are both extensive and of good quality. The introduction of pike into such lochs aids, no doubt, in improving the dimensions and quality of the trout, but has not always this effect.

For instance, St Mary's Loch, in Selkirkshire, contains pike and perch in considerable abundance, and yet the trout continue comparatively numerous, and are not distinguished on account of their size, seldom exceeding a pound in weight, and averaging little more than half-a-pound. The breeding waters, consisting of Meggat, Yarrow, and five or six hill burns which help to people the lake in question, are, in this instance, quite sufficient to keep up the supply, notwithstanding the ravages presumed to be committed by the fresh-water tyrant—which fish, I may mention, infests only the weedy portions of the loch, and is not found equally distributed, as is the case in Loch

Leven, and many of our Highland sheets of water, around the margin. Were it so—were every point of access to the shallows held in keeping by pike, most assuredly the trout would decrease in number; and, should a fair proportion of their feeding-grounds remain at the same time accessible to them, they, as certainly, would increase in respect to size. We have illustrations of the fact afforded us by what has been noticed in a number of our Highland lochs: for instance, in Loch Tummel, in Perthshire; in Loch Vennachar, near Callander; also in Lochs Garve, Achnanault, and Ledgowan, in Ross-shire, as well as the Migdale loch, near Bonar bridge, in Sutherlandshire. In all these expanses of water the pike are numerous, and pretty equally distributed along the margin, having the desirable shelter and accommodation. The trout associated with them are consequently not abundant; but, generally speaking, of large size. They vary in point of weight from one and a half up to six or eight pounds.

The above observations regarding the size of fresh-water trout hold reference entirely to those contained in our lochs, and to such, no question, the precedence ought to be allowed, for undeniably they excel our river-trout in many respects. Not only do they attain a greater size, and that, considering their advantages in point of shelter and feeding-ground, naturally enough, but in general, also, they possess a finer quality, and bear away the palm with regard to external beauty. River-trout, however, although inferior in all these respects, command to a larger extent the esteem of the angler. They afford him sport of a more varied and delightful character than that which he obtains from the exercise of his art over lakes and fish-ponds. The passing from stream to stream—from rough water to smooth—from shoal to deep—from rock to weed and gravel, is of itself enjoyment, and increases one's zest for the pastime; whereas in loch fishing there is a certain degree of tameness and monotony, arising from the circumstance of there being no great essential change in the position of the angler. Whether the surface be calm, gently rippled, or wrought into foam-covered waves, still, be it from boat or marge, he has to ply on, without relief, in the same uniform style. No wonder, therefore, that he

attaches more consideration to the trout of the stream than to those of the lake, and holds in higher repute a three-pounder captured with gossamer tackle out of some wandering rivulet, than one of twice that weight — a lumbering, wiry-jawed, disheartened monster, hauled by main force through a medium whose resistance, at the best, is of a sluggish and passive nature.

I am unable to state accurately the largest size to which trout, bred and nourished in our Scottish rivers, have been known to grow. It is probable that individuals, purely of the river sort, have attained the weight of ten or twelve pounds. In the *Aberdeen Journal*, September 1833, one is made mention of, caught by the gamekeeper at Haughton, in the Don, with rod and line, which weighed eleven pounds, and measured in girth seventeen inches. On Tweed, they have frequently been captured in the cairn-nets, and otherwise, upwards of six pounds; and more than once, above eight pounds in weight. In the spring of 1850, on the Rutherford casts, near Kelso, a trout was taken with the fly by Professor Low of Edinburgh, weighing seven pounds; on the river Till, in 1849, one of seven and a half pounds was caught by a Mr Davidson from Berwick; and on Teviot in 1848, Richard Denniston, Esq., killed one of six and a half pounds. At Loch Inver, in Sutherlandshire, in 1850, I saw the skin of a yellow trout taken with the fly on the river Inver, by Mr Dunbar, which weighed fifteen and three quarter pounds, but it is highly probable that this fish had descended from Loch Assynt, and was not, properly speaking, a river trout. The trout in Tay occasionally grow to a large size, but I am not aware that any surpassing in weight the biggest found in Tweed have of late years been taken from this river or its tributaries, those excepted which have made their way into its streams out of the loch above Kenmore, Loch Tummel, or some other sheet of water bearing the same relation to it, and containing trout of considerable weight.

Sluggish streams, that traverse a rich soil, or have a marly channel, are greatly favourable to the growth, I do not say the increase, of trout. Of this sort are several of the Fifeshire waters — the Orr, the Leven, and the Eden. In all these, river-trout were wont to be caught of a large



size, excelling, in point of shape and quality, those of our more notable streams. Machinery, drainage, and other agricultural improvements, have, however, contributed greatly to thin the breeds in question, and in their place, pike, perch, and eels, hold to a certain extent the ascendancy.

Of all streams that I am acquainted with, the Leet, which discharges itself into the Tweed above Coldstream, was wont, considering its size, to contain the largest trout. During the summer season, it is a mere ditch; in many places, not above four or five span in width, and where broadest, still capable of being leapt across. The run of water is, comparatively speaking, insignificant, not equaling in the average a cubic foot. This, however, as it proceeds, is every now and then expanded over a considerable surface, and forms a pool of some depth: in fact, the whole stream from head to foot, pursuing, as it does, a winding course for upwards of twelve miles, is a continued chain of pools, fringed during the summer on both sides with rushes and water-flags, and choked up in many parts with pickerel weed, and other aquatic plants. The channel of Leet contains shell-marl, and its banks, being hollowed out beneath, afford, independent of occasional stones and tree-roots, excellent shelter for trout. Not many years ago, the whole course of it was infested with pike, but the visit of some otters, irrespective of the angler's art, has completely cleared them out, and thus allowed the trout, which were formerly scarce, to become more numerous.

On the first occasion of my fishing Leet, which happened to be early in April 1841, before the sedge and rushes had assumed the ascendancy, I captured with the fly twenty-six trout, weighing in all upwards of twenty-nine pounds. Of these, five at least were two-pounders, and there were few, if any, small-sized fish. In 1842, on the 2d day of June, the weather being bright and hot, I killed with the worm, out of the same stretch of water, betwixt Castlelaw and Boughtrig, forty-two trout, weighing upwards of twenty-three pounds; also, on a similar day in June 1846, betwixt ten and two o'clock in the forenoon, I managed to encreele three dozen and five fish, the largest of which was a three-pounder, and there were at least twelve others that weighed a pound a-piece. The gross weight, on this

occasion, I neglected to take note of, but it certainly approached two stone.

I mention these facts, not by way of recounting anything extraordinary achieved with the rod, but simply in order to show that the size of trout does not depend greatly upon the size of the stream they inhabit, but to a large degree upon the superiority of the feeding, and the accommodation, or shelter afforded them. As a contrast to the above-mentioned rivulet, I may name the Esk, in Dumfriesshire, a river entitled, from its width and discharge, to be reckoned among our second-class waters. The trout which this river contains, seldom attain the weight of half a pound. They are also, comparatively speaking, thinly scattered throughout its streams; and these circumstances are owing, partly to the scarcity of food, and partly to the inconvenient nature of the shelter which is furnished, not, as in Tweed or Teviot, throughout the course of the channel, but only here and there, in irregular pools, among rocks and shifting gravels. It is the same on the Dee, and other rivers of a similar character; while streams, wholly insignificant in point of dimensions, often produce large and well-conditioned trout, or, what is equivalent, an abundance of small and middle-sized ones. Leet, Eden, Kale, Bowmont-water, are instances of this sort, in my own neighbourhood; in Perthshire, the May-water; in Selkirkshire, the numerous burns that fall into Ettrick, and so on.

The trout, if well fed, grows with astonishing rapidity; under any circumstances not absolutely hostile to its existence, it acquires, in the course of four or five months, dimensions which entitle it to a place in the angler's creel—at any rate, in the frying-pan. Its growth, in point of fact, is not greatly disturbed by lack of food, during the first season of its existence; and, accordingly, in almost all rivers it attains a certain size, I do not say condition, in the same extent of time. This is easily accounted for. During what may be termed its infancy, it requires little nourishment, and this, the quantity it requires, the most barren streams can afford; whereas, to a fish of more mature growth, such waters are quite inadequate to furnish it in the requisite sufficiency. Accordingly, in streams of this nature, trout seldom or never attain to a large size.

They naturally become dwarfish and ill-conditioned, obliged as they are to subsist upon a measure of food not a whit more ample than what they had the power of obtaining, and actually did engross, without either craving or surfeit, during the first year of their existence.

In the generality of our Scottish rivers, for example the Tweed and Teviot, furnishing an ample, but not extraordinary, supply of food, the growth and age of the trout inhabiting them may be reckoned as follows. The fry, I presume, have been hatched in the month of April. They continue growing, during the first year, as long as a regular supply of ground and surface food is afforded them, until the latter end, probably, of October. By this period, they have acquired a length of six or seven inches, and a corresponding weight of from two and a half to three and a half ounces. Feeding precariously during the winter, they gain no additional weight, but rather the contrary, until the spring months. About the latter end of March, the river-flies making their appearance, they begin to feed regularly, and, as a consequence, recommence growing. By the time the supplies have again become stinted, they have acquired an accession to their length of about a couple of inches, and weigh from five up to seven ounces. A considerable proportion of the trout of this, the second year's growth, are in spawning trim during September, and others part with their milt a few weeks later; but a great number there are among them which do not arrive at breeding condition until the autumn and winter following. The trout of the third year's growth form the generality of those captured by the angler with fly about the end of April and beginning of May, averaging, as they do, from seven to nine ounces each, and occupying at that period, to the exclusion of smaller fry, (which still hold to the pools and deeper portions of the river,) the main streams and currents.

During the first showers of March-browns, these, the trout of the third year's growth, are generally foremost on the feed, interspersed, however, with a few of their seniors—the survivors of a former generation. Of this latter description are those approaching to or upwards of a pound in weight—a stage of growth, on reaching which, I believe that many of our river-trout cease progressing. Others,

however, which have taken up a convenient haunt or post of attack, and instinctively prefer coarse and abundant feeding, attain to a much larger size. A few individuals, also, the inhabitants of the rivers I speak of, owing, in the same manner, to the advantages they possess in acquiring food of a finer quality—locating themselves, for instance, under a range of alders, or at the mouth of a feeder—reach, without any loss of proportion, more than the average weight of full-grown trout. These latter subsist, almost entirely, upon ground and surface food, and only occasionally, as a change, and when the other is scarce, resort to the minnow or parr.

The above remarks bear reference, as I have already stated, to the trout frequenting a large number of our Scottish streams, both main rivers and their tributaries, and, with such modifications as are imposed upon them through some peculiarity in the feeding afforded by this or that water, may be held as of general application. When the feeding supplied by a stream or burn falls—I am talking of quantity only—below the average, trout seldom attain to more than a quarter of a pound in weight. They may abound in numbers, but these, in general, are lank, large-headed fish, that give little or no sport. Many of our Highland streams are of the description above mentioned. They have no winter supply of food at all. They travel, at least half their course, over rocks. Their banks have undergone little or no tillage. They are incapable of receiving it. Here, like the channel itself, they are solid rock; there, they are the debris of the torrent; sometimes they present to the eye a fringe of heather; sometimes a miry swamp; sometimes a forest nurtured by its own sheddings: seldom do they give indication of being supplied, during a flood, with loam or rich soil, yielding insects and their deposits; but, on the contrary, the occurrence of a winter spate only despoils their courses of such unappropriated aliment as found lodgment therein during the summer months. Such, along the greater portion of its career, is the Dee; such are the Coe and the Spean; such, also, are many of the mountain feeders in Perthshire, Inverness-shire, Aberdeenshire—in fact, throughout the northern Highlands of Scotland. Hence we find the trout inhabiting them dwarfish in size, lean, and unhealthy.

Even in the course of summer, when insect food is tolerably abundant, they make little improvement, and seldom do we see them encroached upon by varieties from neighbouring streams or lochs, unless with the intent, on the part of larger trout, to assail and devour them ; or, it may be, when forced by circumstances to deposit their spawn.

Should the feeding, however, greatly exceed the average—I still speak in respect to quantity—although it rarely does so without the implication also of a superior quality of subsistence, trout will not only attain to a weight exceeding what I have mentioned to be that common to a full-grown Tweed fish, under ordinary circumstances, but they will arrive at it in a far shorter period of time—in the course, it may be, of two, or at most three years ; whereas the Tweed trout needs four to acquire its sixteen ounces, and then ceases growing. Thus, in Leet or Eden, a trout of the second year's growth is as heavy as a three, or even a four years old fish pastured among the channels of Tweed or Ettrick ; and were the trout of these insignificant waters suffered undisturbed to reach their full size, which there is no question they would do in the course of five or six years, numbers would be found among them, as was the case not long ago, weighing severally upwards of two pounds. Thus, also, in respect to many lakes, fish-ponds, and old marl-pits, into which the fry of trout have been put. As long as these possess a superabundance of both ground and surface food, the young fish will thrive astonishingly, and arrive, in an incredibly short space of time, at dimensions exceeding those of average-sized river-trout.

But without enlarging any further upon this subject, I shall conclude, with a single observation, all that is essential to be said in regard to the growth of fish—namely, that as sheep and cattle will not fatten and thrive on stinted pastures, or barren, exposed moorland, so neither will the finny tribe, be the stream ever so pure and abundant, acquire size and condition, unless sufficiently sheltered and amply and regularly provisioned. On the other hand, possessed of these advantages, they have all that is required in order to do them justice ; while breeds or varieties of fish, hitherto pronounced shapeless and impracticable, will, when transferred to such favoured loca-

lities, become seemly in their proportions, active in their dispositions, and relishable, if not rich-tasted, as food.

Besides the *Salmo fario* and its countless varieties, there are three other species of fresh-water trout, held by several naturalists to inhabit our Scottish lakes and rivers. These are the Gillarloo or Gizzard trout, the *Salmo caecifer* or *Levenensis*, and the *Salmo ferox*.

THE GILLARLOO.—Of our numerous Scottish lakes, a great proportion of which has been investigated by naturalists, one only is affirmed, with any degree of positiveness, to contain this species of trout. It is a small tarn or loch, situated on a shoulder of Ben More, in Sutherlandshire, about three miles from Innisnadampf, named Mulach Corry. I visited it in August 1850, under somewhat unfavourable circumstances, during the occurrence of a snow-fall and when the loch was partially frozen, but succeeded, both with worm and fly, in securing a few specimens, none of which, however, exceeded in weight half a pound. In the shape and appearance of those fish I was much disappointed, nor did their edible qualities approach the reputation given them. They were very inferior in all respects to the trout of Lochs Awe and Assynt, situated a short way below them; nor did the stomach, when examined, differ so essentially in its muscular conformation as to induce the conclusion that they were a distinct species of trout. The gillarloo, in fact, of Mulach Corry, which is situated upon a limestone rock, I have every reason to think is nothing more than the *fario* or common trout; and that the gizzard or indurated portion of the stomach which distinguishes it, is entirely the result, not the occasion, of its peculiar feeding. This is true at least, that all fresh-water trout engross some measure of testaceous food; and when the opportunity offers, will greedily devour and abundantly thrive upon small shell-fish and horny substances. These, as well as grains or pellets of gravel, I have frequently found in the stomachs of common river trout, mixed with their ordinary fly sustenance; and I have reason to believe they are taken in order to assist digestion.

This species of trout, I have been told, was discovered in Loch Garve, in Ross-shire, by the late Sir Humphry Davy. In his *Salmonia*, however, he states distinctly, that “ex-

cept in Ireland, he never found a gillaroo trout." The Loch Garve trout, of which I have caught many fine specimens, are, I may mention, very unlike, in all respects, those of Mulach Corry, and, previous to the partial drainage of the lake, had few rivals in point of shape, beauty, and flavour among the finny tribe.

SALMO CÆCIFER, or LEVENENSIS.—The far-famed trout of Loch Leven are distinguished, I understand, many of them, from the common fresh-water trout, by the numerical superiority of their cœcal appendages. Although these, in their numerical relation, are insisted upon by Dr Parnell and others, as characteristics of the species, I see no reason why they should be relied on as such; and when I find that what have been described as the distinguishing features of the Loch Leven trout are, to my certain knowledge, held in common by the finny inhabitants of many of our Highland lochs, I certainly feel entitled to question the correctness of this mode of deciding upon the species. The following is an extract from an article published in the "Transactions of the Royal Society of Edinburgh," (Trans. vol. xiv. pp. 9 and 10,) with regard to the *Salmo Levenensis* or *Cœcifer*, by Richard Parnell, Esq., M.D., F.R.S.E., &c. :—

"This species of trout, which is well known to many persons as a delicious article of food, is considered by most naturalists as a variety of the *Salmo fario*, or common fresh-water trout, the redness of its flesh depending on the nature of its food. I consider it, however, not only as distinct from the *Salmo fario*, but as one of the best defined and most constant in its characters of all the species hitherto described. It is at once distinguished from the common fresh-water trout, by the number of its cœcal appendages, which vary from seventy to eighty; whereas, in the *Salmo fario*, they are never more than forty-five or forty-six in number. Its tail is crescent-shaped at all ages, and the body has never the vestige of a red spot. The tail of the common trout is sinuous and at length even at the end, and its body is always marked with red spots, besides its flesh being always of a white appearance."

This latter assertion certainly proves Dr Parnell's acquaintance with the trout of our lakes and rivers to have been extremely limited.

**SALMO FEROX.**—This species of the *Salmonidæ* is met with in various lakes in the Highlands of Scotland. It is well known to inhabit Loch Awe in Argyllshire, where its discovery has been attributed to a Mr Morrison, from Glasgow, nearly seventy years ago. The inhabitants of the district, however, must have been well acquainted with its existence, long prior to that period. The *ferox* has also been captured, along one of the chains of lakes which encompass part of the Grampian range, that comprehending Lochs Voil and Lubnaig. A trout belonging to this species, the skin of which I have seen, was taken in 1846, by my friend Charles Ker, Esq., from the lake last mentioned. It weighed, when newly captured, fifteen pounds and a half. At the sources of the Tummel, in Lochs Rannoch and Lydoch, as well as Loch Ericht, large trout, possessing the characteristics of the *ferox*, are frequently taken. Of these, no fewer than twenty-five were, I have been told, captured with trolling tackle, in the course of a single season, (1849,) by Major Cheape, on Rannoch Loch.

This fish exists also in many of the Sutherlandshire lakes, and is trolled for throughout the year on Lochs Shin and Assynt. It is met with also in the chain of lakes superintending the Kirkaig river. These consist of Lochs Boarlan, near Altnagealach, Lochs Urigill, Cama, Veyatie and Fewn. Also, in Lochs Laoghal and Craggie, from which the Borge descends, the *ferox* is well known to abound.

Of the *Salmo ferox* of Sutherlandshire, there are two distinct varieties. The one is a coarse-looking fish, having a huge head furnished with rapacious jaws. The tail is broad and square-formed. Its external markings are numerous, and irregularly distributed. The colour of its skin is not inviting. It wants freshness and transparency. Of this breed, I saw three specimens at Lairg in 1850; the largest eleven pounds in weight. I also captured one of about six pounds on Loch Assynt. The other variety includes fish of captivating build, deep in the flank, with curved backs and small heads. The *maculæ* are few in number, but large, and distinctly formed. The teeth, more than the size and structure of the mouth, announce them to be of predatory habits. These are strong, sharp, and set in separate lines along the upper jaw. Its flesh is redder than even that of the *Salmo salar*, although by



no means so relishable. I caught an individual of this variety, weighing six pounds, on Loch Shin. Both descriptions of trout are also, it may be mentioned, met with on Loch Awe ; the latter, however, is properly the *Salmo ferox*, and corresponds with the great lake trout, or Buddach, of Loch Neagh in Ireland. Of the size attained by this fish, various accounts have reached me. There is no question but that individuals have been caught exceeding twenty pounds in weight. I have seen specimens, said to be those of trout, bordering upon that figure ; and the late Mr Maule, a persevering and successful frequenter of Loch Awe, has, I am assured, taken them half a stone heavier. In the spawning season, when numbers of these fish push down to the outlet of the loch, they may be tempted to rise at the salmon lures ordinarily used on the river Awe ; but, at other times, they are only to be captured by trolling for them from a boat, at a considerable depth and with strong tackle, the bait employed consisting of a trout of five ounces in weight, fortified with well-tempered hooks. The *ferox* is a more powerful fish than the *Salmo salar*, but not quite so active ; still, it often manages to make its escape when hooked, and will ensconce itself securely among weeds, leaving to the angler no remedy but to break and part company.

THE SWALLOW-SMOLT OF TWEED.—Allied in some respects to the *ferox*, is what, in the lower districts of Tweedside, has been designated a Swallow-smolt. It forms, I am inclined to think, not a mere variety of the common *fario*, but a distinct species of trout. I am not, indeed, aware that the swallow-smolt, or any breed of river trouts at all resembling it, is to be found, except in Tweed itself. This fish is of highly predatory habits, and will seldom, if ever, rise at the common trouting-fly. It is caught generally by means of the parr-tail tackle, about the latter end of May and beginning of June, when the last of the smolts are on their way seaward. Its appearance resembles, in some respects, that of the bull-trout ; the head is large, the teeth particularly strong, the *maculae* irregularly but profusely distributed ; the whole formation that of a powerful and rapacious fish. As regards its edible qualities, it is at all times coarse and rank-flavoured. The swallow-smolt, when on the outlook for prey, frequents the hings

or breaks at the head of strong, rough water, and is frequently taken, by rod and cairn net, from the rockiest portions of the river, such as the turbulent eddies and foam-runs of the Trow Craggs. Its average weight is from two to four pounds, but individuals have been caught that weighed nearly half a stone. Were the production of a breed of hybrids betwixt the *fario* and *eriox* a thing of likely occurrence, I might possibly have fixed upon the swallow-smolt as the issue; questioning, however, the existence of such a production, I cannot help regarding it as a distinct species of the *Salmonidæ*.

## CHAPTER II.

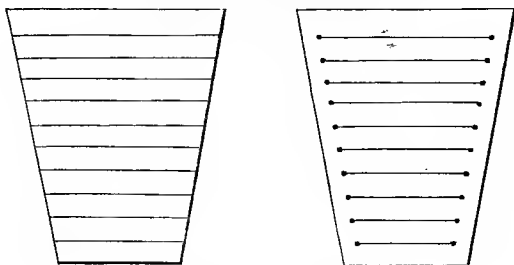
### ANGLER'S TACKLE AND EQUIPMENT.

GUT, a material so useful to the angler, is a preparation from the entrails of the silk-worm. It is fabricated, principally for our British market, in various parts of Spain, Portugal, Italy, and Sicily. Spanish gut is, unquestionably, in higher repute than any other ; its quality either being intrinsically finer, or more attention is paid to its manufacture and getting up. It is not nearly so long as some of the Sicilian article, which evidently is produced from a larger variety of silk-worm. This advantage, however, in the latter, is counterbalanced by the coarseness of its texture, as well as by the want of roundness and equality in the thread or fibre. Good useful gut is always distinguished by the possession of these two properties. It should also be quite transparent, not lacteous in its appearance, and free withal from flaw, film, and flossy matter. In Syria, also, a considerable quantity of this article is manufactured and used by fishermen on the clear waters of the Mediterranean. I was presented with several parcels of it lately, one or two of which, containing some hundreds of threads, are really excellent, almost as strong and round as the best Spanish gut, and of fully twice the length. Attention, I understand, has recently been directed to its manufacture in that quarter ; and we may hope, ere long, for supplies of an article greatly superior to any at present in use. The descriptions of gut most difficult to procure, are those used for fine trouting and for salmon fishing. What intervenes betwixt the above-mentioned sorts is abundant enough, and very excellent hanks of this accommodating description may be picked up now-a-days,

at a small expense. Still it is desirable that the angler have a larger choice of the qualities above mentioned; and I think a little trouble on the part of those importing it would secure an ample supply of both. The following is a recipe I have copied from a small anonymous treatise on Angling, relative to the manufacture of silk-worm gut:—

“Take the largest and best worms you can procure, just when they begin to spin. This may be known by their refusing to feed, and by their having a fine silk thread hanging from their mouths. The worms must be kept in strong vinegar, and covered close over for twelve hours, if the weather is warm; if not, two or three hours longer will be necessary. When taken out, they must be pulled asunder, and you will see two transparent guts of a yellowish green colour, as thick as a straw, bent double, the rest of the inside resembling boiled spinage; you can make no mistake. If you find the guts soft, or break upon stretching them, you must let the worms lie longer in the vinegar; when fit to draw off, you must dip one in the vinegar, and stretch it gently with both hands to the proper length. The gut thus drawn out, must be stretched out on a thin piece of board, by putting each end in a slit therein, and placed in the sun to dry. This is the real gut, and the mode of dressing it is the cause of its ends being cramped.”

BOARDS USED FOR STRETCHING GUT.



I am of opinion, from experiments made by me at various times, that it is advantageous for the angler to

employ stained or dyed gut, in preference to the material in its natural state. I have ascertained also, that there are two colours, or rather tints, that take the precedence over all others, in producing the desired effect; that is, in concealing or rendering it invisible to the eye of the trout or salmon, as well as the observation of the onlooker. With regard to the experiments in question, they were made, some at the bridge below Coldstream, and others at Teviot Bridge, near Kelso; a party on each occasion being stationed to report, on the key-stone of one of the arches, and immediately superintending the cast underneath. The conclusion I have come to is, that the walnut leaf, or brown dye, is best calculated for the purpose required; although, on a bright day, and in clear water, a bluish or neutral tinge is perhaps more desirable. The former of these colours is obtained simply from a decoction of walnut leaves, or bark, using two handfuls to a quart of water. Into this liquid, when in a cool state, the gut should be placed, and allowed to soak for two or three hours; or it may be immersed, for a few seconds only, in the hot fluid, and then rinsed well in cold water.

As to the bluish dye: This is obtained from a decoction of shavings or dust of logwood, a handful to the quart of water. Boil these for about a quarter of an hour, and throw in a small piece of alum, about the size of a horse bean. On removing your pan from the fire, dip the gut in while the liquor is still hot, allowing it to remain half a minute or so, according to the thickness and quality of the threads, and then transferring it, as before, to cold water. After you have washed it, shake off the superfluous moisture, and allow the hank to dry thoroughly, before laying it by. Silk-worm gut, I may here remark, when in the hank or considerable quantities, should be wrapt up lengthwise, in a piece of chamois leather, which keeps it in much better trim than paper does.

HORSE HAIR, LINES, &c.—Before the introduction and general use of silk-worm gut, I can readily understand how valuable a really good selection of this article must have been to the angler. Indeed, judging from the specimens that, from time to time, have come under my notice of the fishing-tackle used by our forefathers, I am led to the opinion that there is no horse-hair to be obtained, in

our modern days, which, in point of roundness, length, and power, at all approximates to what was employed by them. This is owing partly to the practice, now in vogue, of docking our stallions before the tail has had time to acquire its full strength, and partly, also, to the care and attention formerly exercised in the selection of the article. One of the finest specimens of good horse-hair I ever remember to have met with, was presented to me, along with a bait hook and some red hackles, by the late Mr William Laidlaw, the friend and factor of Sir Walter Scott. This and its accompaniments were part and parcel of the identical fishing-tackle discovered along with the mislaid MSS. of Waverley, and alluded to by Sir Walter in the General Preface to his Novels. I make no doubt, but with the single hair in question, I could have managed, provided my rod was a pliant one and my reel-line ran easily, a salmon of ten or twelve pounds in weight; not indeed in such water as the Trow Craggs, or any of the rocky straits and clippers that afford facilities for fish to cut or wear through the line; but in an open, unobstructed cast or pool, where the salmon could show no cunning, and, at the same time, exert its full strength and speed. The hair alluded to, I may mention, was white, clear, and long, not of the coarse, black description, which even now-a-days is common enough, and possesses, without question, strength to capture the largest of our river fish.

As to colour, however, the natural chestnut is preferable, especially for casting-lines. With regard to the reel or winch-line, it is of little or no consequence what colour of hair is put into requisition. A mixture of black and white is most commonly employed in its manufacture, and perhaps, next to good chestnut hair, is really best adapted for the purpose. I am not partial to pure white hair, either for casting or running lines; but my objection rests chiefly on the circumstance of the material, as found in the market, being, in nineteen cases out of twenty, bad or unequal. Casting-lines, especially, should always be formed of choice hairs. These should be selected to correspond one with the other, and ought to possess, as essential properties, length, roundness, and perfect equality.

The upper casting-line, generally used by salmon fishers, and requisite as an assistance in throwing the fly, is composed of three or four links, and extends, when these are joined, to about six feet. Each link contains from eighteen to twelve hairs, according to the strength and thickness of the winch-line to which it is intended to be attached. The upper casting-line ought also to taper gradually, so as to admit of the lower or gut one forming, when looped on, a continuation with it, in point of thickness. This is managed by diminishing the number of hairs in every successive link; that is to say, supposing the uppermost length is formed of eighteen hairs, the one following should contain fifteen, and so on, down to twelve and nine.

In the making up of casting-lines, great attention should be paid to the knotting and tying, as well as twisting, which some prefer executing solely with the hand, in preference to the machine. I can affirm, however, from experience, that the machine answers the purpose better, not only in point of expedition, but it produces more equal and trustworthy work. Take care, however, not to over-twist the links, and see that the hair, which ought previously to be washed with soap and water, is quite dry. Silk-worm gut, on the contrary, when spun up into casting-lines, ought to be soaked in lukewarm water, and attached to the machine while wet, and before losing its pliancy. And as to gut casting-lines, they ought always to be constructed of long, choice gut, carefully assorted. Every separate length should consist of three threads, equal in thickness, I mean as regards that individual length; for, to regulate the tapering of the line, lengths of various thicknesses are required to be spun, and a careful selection made from them before joining.

The triple gut casting-line ought to extend fully six or seven feet, and is intended either to succeed the hair casting-line, in salmon fishing, or to be appended immediately to the winch-line, by the trout fisher. Linked to it, is the single gut casting-line, composed of three or four successive strands of picked material, carefully knotted, and, if intended for large fish, tied over at the joinings with silk thread. Of course, by salmon fishers, this addition is dispensed with, when triple gut is found necessary or more useful. In fine waters, on the contrary, it is often expe-

dient to add to the length of this portion of the casting-line, as well in salmon as in trout fishing, in order to keep up the deception and not alarm the fish.

But I think it unnecessary further to enlarge upon the subject of lines, in the present chapter, as various instructions respecting them lie interspersed throughout the treatise ; and as to the knotting together of the threads or strands, I deem it proper merely to mention one or two of the most approved methods of joining.

**THE WATER KNOT, SINGLE AND DOUBLE.**—This knot is completed, simply by laying the ends of the two threads, links, or strands, required to be joined, alongside of each other ; then, doubling the one round the forefinger of the right hand, and passing one of the links and its corresponding end through the loop thus formed, draw all tight. Should the material be silk-worm gut, allow the knot to soak a moment in the mouth before drawing. In making the double knot, pass the lengths twice through, instead of once ; this will give greater security to the line, and prevent all possibility of the ends slipping. The double water-knot should always be adopted in making up fine or single tackle for salmon, but gives a clumsy appearance to the trouting line. After the knot is completed, clip away the useless portions of the lengths, but not too closely ; and, in the case of casting-lines, tie over what is left with fine silk thread. I seldom tie over the knots of the single gut or foot-line in this manner, unless at such a distance from the hook that they do not generally come into contact with the water, and are thus rendered liable to be mistaken for flies. The water-knot is unquestionably the simplest and most expeditious, if not the safest, knot used by the angler ; but there is another mode of joining lengths of single gut, occasionally practised on Tweedside, and which it behoves him to become acquainted with. This is executed by laying the ends of gut intended to be joined side by side ; form a simple knot over each, with the other, thus :—

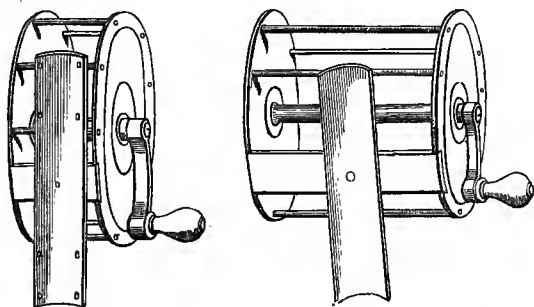


Draw the knots tight, and pull them together. They will



hold fast, in the right direction, but can be separated, so far, without trouble, by simply drawing them asunder. In affixing bobs or droppers, this mode of joining together the lengths which compose the foot-line has its advantages—the bob or dropper requiring no loop, but simply a small knot at the head of the gut it is attached to. When inserted betwixt the closing ends above described, this knot, on their being drawn together, will prevent the dropper from slipping off; at the same time, it can readily be disengaged, and another, at the option of the angler, substituted in its place.

**THE REEL, OR WINCH.**—A great improvement has of recent years taken place in the form and construction of the reel, or winch. By reducing the length of the barrel and pillars, and enlarging the diameter of the brass plates between which they are confined, the line can be wound up with much greater speed and regularity than when the plates used were narrow, and the distance betwixt them considerable.



The catch, also, or rack, is generally abolished, although some anglers naturally enough retain a prejudice in its behalf. This appendage, however, and all machinery intended to assist the winding up, can beneficially be dispensed with. The simpler, in fact, in these respects, the reel is, the better; it not only lets off the line more readily, but is less liable to become deranged in its action.

Among other improvements recently made upon the reel or winch, are those which relate to the handle. This is

now constructed so as to fold over or be readily detached, according to the pleasure of the angler, and thus facilitate the carrying or packing up of the machine. Checks, also, have of late years been introduced, and the mode of affixing the reel to the rod altered and improved. A still more recent improvement consists in the substitution of a thick hollow barrel for the slender solid one commonly in use. The advantage of this contrivance is twofold. First, the air confined in the tube or hollow barrel assists to dry the line and preserve it free from rot. Again, should a large active fish threaten to exhaust the contents of the reel, the improved barrel will give off freely to the end, and recover with the desirable speed and regularity; whereas, in the case of the winch ordinarily in use, the extreme end of the line, at such a crisis, is generally at fault in its movements, yielding, if at all, with constraint and hesitation, and occasioning, on its being wound up again, considerable delay, at the moment, too, when expedition is most required.

**THE ROD.**—Caprice and custom regulate largely the fancy of individuals in respect to this implement. One holds stiffness as a requisite, another pliancy; one prefers the single-handed, another the double-handed rod; some use a butt piece of hickory, some of ash, and others of fir-wood; this angler, again, in the matter of the top-piece, esteems lance—that bamboo; and, as to the ferrule, I meet with one who commends the plain joint and socket—another who countenances the Scottish screw—and a third who disclaims the use of brass joinings altogether, and stands up in behalf of the tie system. In short, there is no termination to the variety of tastes and prejudices on the subject of fishing-rods. The rings, the colouring, the varnish, the lower fittings, all fall, as matters of dispute, within the contentious circle; nor, indeed, do the observation of many years, and the most ample and unprejudiced testing of rods of every description—stiff and pliant, light and heavy, single and double-handed—enable me so decisively to pronounce an opinion upon one and all of these matters, as even to approach an adjustment of differences in respect to them.

I can only state, from personal experience, that a very few days' practice will frequently suffice to reconcile one

to the use of a rod which, at the first handling, he felt somewhat dissatisfied with. I do not say that it discovered any glaring fault in the build or material—for these are matters requiring strict scrutiny and attention—but it wanted a particular virtue, which he imagined the implement he was accustomed to use possessed; it could not, in fact, heave out the line so satisfactorily, or drop the fly with so much nicety, or assist in hooking the fish on rising; perhaps it exhausted the wrist or arm sooner; there was about it, in fact, some vice—it might be an indescribable one—and yet, on a succession of trials, this vice or defect completely vanished. It had been got the better of by practice; nay, in reality, it was not a fault in the rod, but a pre-existing prejudice on the part of its possessor, which, as it arose through habit, could only become extinguished under the same influential dominion.

I have made these remarks as a prelude to this subject, because I consider that many anglers lay a great deal too much stress upon, and are fancifully exact as to the length, the pliancy, the weight, the balance, even the colour of their fishing-rods, not to speak of rings, &c. At the same time, I allow that the purpose for which a rod is made—whether for salmon-fishing, for trolling with minnow, or for trouting with the fly—for streamlet, lake, or broad river—ought to regulate, not merely its proportions, but, in certain cases, its material, number of lengths, and description of finish. The salmon-rod most in use on Tweedside is three-pieced. Its average length is eighteen and a half feet. It is commonly fitted up with one or two spare tops of different degrees of pliancy. In trouting with the fly, a two-handed rod of sixteen feet is frequently used; but as much and neater execution is done with a single-handed weapon of thirteen or twelve and a half feet. For worm and minnow fishing, a light two-handed rod of seventeen feet will be found by far the most serviceable. I shall now treat very shortly of the kinds of wood best adapted for rod-making, their peculiarities and advantages.

The material in general used for the butt-piece, both of the salmon and trouting-rod, is ash. For hollow butts, most rod-makers employ saplings, or young trees, of six or seven years' standing, well dried and seasoned. These, of course, possess a core or inner growth of tender wood, the

extraction of which does not greatly impair the main strength of the piece, while there is this additional advantage, that it can be performed more in accordance with the lie, run, or grain of the material, than were the operation attempted on a portion of plank or sawn tree, out of which solid butts are constructed. Hollow butts, when formed out of plank wood, which they sometimes are, require to be bored with an instrument termed a *phipple* bitt. The boring may advantageously be enlarged by a tool of the same description, only smaller in size, as that used by the cooper in the formation of bung-holes. It is called in Scotland a *schulop*. It would be an improvement in the manufacture of the hollow-butt piece, were the lower or root end of the ash sapling made to receive the ferrule, instead of the upper extremity, which is less tough and consistent, consequently more apt to break or split.

I am of opinion that Memel fir, although not generally used in rod-making, is an excellent substitute for ash, in the construction of the solid butt-piece for a small salmon or grilse-rod. It has the advantage over it in respect of lightness, while, if judiciously selected, there can be no question as to its strength and durability. I have used it for many years, in preference to any other wood, and find that it stands the test thoroughly. Indeed, with regard to three rods manufactured by Mr Forrest of Kelso, under my own directions, some years ago, the butt-pieces of which are made of the wood in question, I can safely affirm that they have stood the test of rough and frequent usage better than any fishing-rods I ever had in my possession; and that still, although I have killed with each of them scores of pike and salmon, as well as oreel-loads of river-trout, the lower lengths are sound and trustworthy as ever. An objection occasionally urged against the Memel fir is, its want of pliancy. That it does not possess this virtue in the same measure as the ash does, I allow. It is, certainly, a little stiff, and fails in communicating to the hand, with agreeable rapidity, the swaying motion of the upper pieces; but I am not convinced that this defect influences the throwing powers of a salmon-rod to any serious extent—certainly not to that extent which a friend of mine, who has fancies of his own on many matters con-

nected with the gentle art—what angler is without them? —attributes to it.

Hickory-wood, on account of its heaviness, is seldom employed in the construction of butt-pieces; but the middle divisions of the generality of fishing-rods are made of it. Of hickory there are several kinds; the most serviceable of which, for the purpose of rod-making, is the red. White hickory, however, is a tougher and more durable material, only it warps when cut up into lengths. Hickory-wood is brought principally from North America, in billets of the thickness of a man's leg and upwards.

Lance-wood is closer-grained and somewhat heavier than hickory. It is a native of Cuba and other West India islands. For top-pieces it is reckoned invaluable, possessing a spring and consistency, together with a capability of being highly wrought and polished, not found in any other wood. The great objection to lance-wood is its weight, and consequent tendency, when used as a top-piece along with different woods, to injure or discompose the just and desirable balance of the rod. In order to obviate this, rod-makers are now in the habit of constructing the top-lengths, partly of lance-wood and partly of bamboo. The bamboo portion consists of a thin slit or slits detached from one of the jointed divisions of the cane. This is rounded off, and otherwise cut and planed, so as to admit of being accurately glued on to the lance-wood section of the intended top-piece, the parts thus annexed being afterwards strengthened by a wrapping of waxed thread and coatings of varnish. Rods constructed almost entirely of bamboo are in use in some parts of England, but they do not suit our Scottish rivers, being possessed of little throwing power, and adapted more for trolling with and the pitching out system, peculiar to some localities where pike are fished for. Of other woods used by rod-makers, I may mention log and purple-wood, which are frequently employed in the construction of the angler's weapon by Irish artists. They are not, however, much appreciated in Scotland. The colouring of fishing-rods is generally effected by an application, with the paint-brush, of nitric acid or vitriol to the wood, when a light brown is required—and of log-wood or Brazil-wood when the taste of the manufacturer or purchaser is in favour of a dark colour.

A coating of vinegar, in which steel filings have lain for a few hours, will change the rich purple of the log-wood into a deep black ; but many manufacturers prefer the natural colour of the ingredient, assisted by a small quantity of copperas.

**THE FERRULE.**—In my younger days, I preferred to any other the Scotch screw-joint, as a mode of affixing the lengths or parts of a fishing-rod. I am now convinced that the English system is a better one—namely, that of simply introducing the lower end of each length into a corresponding sheath or socket in the division it surmounts. This socket is fenced round with a projecting portion of brass tube, which accords in thickness to the end or joint it is intended to receive. A fastening of small twine or thread is then required to make all secure, for which purpose there are affixed hooks or projections of brass wire on each length, immediately above and below the place of conjunction.

I am by no means partial, however, to an innovation lately introduced—namely, the coating with brass of that portion of the inserting joint which comes into juxtaposition with the tube or ferrule. This is done with the view of counteracting the petty annoyance which is liable to occur during wet weather, or in case of the accidental submersion of the rod ; an annoyance arising from the swelling of the confined part of the joint, and that frequently to such a degree as to render it impossible for the angler, by means of mere manual exertion, to separate the pieces. That the brass coating in question does, to some extent, obviate the evil, I allow ; but the remedy, and a partial one it is, has its own very objectionable points. These, also, proceed from a similar cause, the alternate action of drought and moisture, which action, while it but temporarily affects the wooden joint, produces a more lasting and injurious result upon the brass one ; for, in the latter case, by its operation upon the coated portion of the joint, it subserves, in a short time, to slacken and disturb the overlapping metal, and thus the adaptation of length to length, as well as the general firmness and entirety of the rod, becomes materially impaired ; whereas, when the joint is used in its simple or naked state, the slight contraction or expansion of the wood resulting from

drought or moisture, occasions no such injurious effect, inasmuch as there is no necessity, when fitting in the lengths, to be over nice or exact about the point of conjunction.

It is proper, however, especially in the prospect of encountering rain, to grease that portion of each length which is intended to be enclosed. By so doing, you prevent in some measure the swelling of the wood below the ferrule, and render comparatively simple the disengaging of the several divisions. In event, however, of this operation having been neglected, should the angler find it impracticable, by the exercise of a moderate degree of manual strength, to effect the taking down of his rod, he ought by no means, on the instant, to press his object, so as to render possible the racking or injuring of the wood or ferrule; nor should he, if he can possibly avoid doing so, resort to the application of strong heat, in order to reduce the expansion of the wood. I would recommend him to take home the implement in its undetached state, and if convenient, to lay it by for a few days, either in an upright or recumbent position, until the wood has become so thoroughly dried that he can readily, without much effort, unfix the lengths. When necessitated, however, to apply heat, let him employ a pair of nippers or common fire-tongs made red-hot at the extremities. In using these, one must be careful to seize hold of the ferrule or brass tube at or near the centre, so as not to interfere with the waxed wrappings which secure the lower fastening-pin. A very few moments will suffice to communicate the requisite heat equally throughout the joining; the moisture confined in the wood will gradually find vent in steam along the edges of the ferrule, and as it does so, the extrication of the joint from its socket may be accomplished without difficulty.

As a guard against the injury done by rain, &c., many of the Irish rods are constructed with the ferrules inverted—that is, with the tube or socket fixed on the lower end of the length, so as to cap or lie over its corresponding joint. In this case, the rain or moisture trickling towards the butt is prevented from insinuating itself, by the crevices of the joining, into the wood below. This alteration in the position of the ferrule will also, there is no question,

give additional stability to the hollow butt-piece, and materially favour its construction. The butt-pieces, however, I may mention, of the Irish rods, are generally made solid.

RINGS.—Stiff or fixed rings I have always held in disfavour, and decidedly condemn them, as appendages to the fly-fishing rod. They are employed, I am aware, by many anglers, in preference to loose or movable ones ; and it is asserted that, in trolling, they possess a marked advantage over these, in regard to the facility of escape they give the line. I cannot say, for my own part, that I perceive it ; on the contrary, they are apt, I think, greatly to embarrass its movements, and often occasion its entire stoppage.

In point of weight and size, the rings of a rod ought severally to correspond with its power and dimensions. Regard also must be paid to the thickness and material of the winch-line which they are intended to give escape to. In order to maintain this regard, it is not necessary, however, to sacrifice proportion in any great extent. The reel line itself is of faulty thickness, should such sacrifice to its accommodation be found needful. In fact, the two ought so to suit each other that the rings on the taper or light portion of the rod will admit the passing through of the line in a looped state, or even when a single knot occurs.

HOOKS.—I have tested, during a long course of practice, hooks of all sorts, shapes, and sizes, and have come to the conclusion that there are few to be met with in the market excelling those of Philips and Adlington—the former being a Dublin maker, and constructing his wire, as to the bend and temper, on the Limerick or Irish system, while the latter chiefly manufactures what is well known under the name of the round-bend hook. I may mention, however, that there are many other makers throughout the kingdom who vie with them, to a certain extent, in the fabrication of this article. For instance, of Irish hook-makers, there are Martin Kelly of Dublin, and the O'Shaughnessys in Limerick ; Holyoake and Bartleet also, needlemakers in Redditch, hold claim to public support.

I like, however, Philips' hooks and those of Adlington better than any in use ; the former as adapted for all sorts of large flies, from those used in spring trouting up



to the biggest salmon ones—the latter, as suited for the smaller kinds of trout-flies, also for bait-hooks and minnow-tackles.

The round-bends are assorted numerically, from 00, the smallest midge, up to 20, the largest salmon size. Philips' hooks are classed in a different way: the trouting ones by letters, the salmon ones by figures—thus, FE represents the smallest Irish trouting fly, F the next, then FF, and next to it FFF; after which follow C, double C, B and double B, which letter, from C upwards, have their half sizes. BB, the largest of the lettered or trouting descriptions, being frequently used as a grilse hook, is admitted also among those which rank by number, and stands at the foot of the salmon sizes as No. 9. Above it follow 8, 7, 6, 5, and 4, the last being the largest size manufactured for salmon fishing. All the numbers have their half or intervening sizes. The Redditch hooks range as follows:—Salmon sizes from 1 to 7; trouting descriptions from 7 down to 16, the smallest.

I would recommend the purchaser of hooks, in any quantity, always to test their strength. This is easily done, by pressing the point into a piece of wood, and exerting a due degree of force on the bend and other portions of the wire, the shank of the hook being firmly held betwixt the thumb and forefinger. Nothing can be more annoying to the angler than to find himself, on a fishing excursion, equipped with an assortment of worthless wire; and yet, as regards trouting flies, how frequently this occurs. I think, however, the hooks of Adlington and of Philips may be safely commended, in their separate styles<sup>s</sup> of manufacture, as among the best in the market.

**VARNISH.**—No angler, as part of his equipment, should neglect having a small phial containing spirit varnish. It is serviceable to him in many respects; it strengthens and improves the appearance of all worm and minnow tackles; it may be applied with advantage at the finishing point of fly-hooks, the head or tail; in the construction, also, of casting-lines, where the ends require to be tied over with silk thread, its employment is beneficial; but that part of the angler's stock to which its application from time to time is most needed, consists of the rod itself. When the

upper portion of the top-piece is manufactured of bamboo slits, it should be applied, as far as these are concerned, frequently, and in layers or coats of moderate thickness. Rods in much use ought to be varnished over at least twice or thrice during the season, and always at its close. This rule attended to, they will be found to last much longer, and retain their springiness in its early perfection. Of varnish so employed for rods and tackle, the most generally useful consists in a solution of various gums among spirits of wine. Copal varnish is also made use of, but, in comparison with the other, dries slowly. The best mode of laying on the preparation is by means of a small paint-brush or hair-pencil.

#### RECIPES FOR MAKING SPIRIT VARNISH.

##### TRANSPARENT.

Sandarac, . . .	4 oz.		Elemi, (true,) . . .	1 oz.
Pale seedlac, . . .	2 oz.		Alcohol, . . .	1 qt.

Digest with agitation till dissolved, then add Venice turpentine 2 oz.

##### BROWN VARNISH.

Seedlac, . . .	1 oz.		Alcohol, . . .	3 oz.
Digest as above.				

The simple preparation last mentioned will be found highly serviceable. A small quantity of gum sandarac ought to be added. Elemi is preferred by some. In varnishing rods and tackle, do so in a dry room, and near a fire or stove, otherwise the varnish is apt to assume a white appearance.

**THE GAFF, OR LANDING-HOOK.**—This implement is exceedingly useful to the salmon-fisher. It consists of a large hook, fastened upon or screwed into a shaft or handle, varying in length from three to five or six feet. It is much used in the neighbourhood of Kelso, and facilitates greatly the capture of a tired fish, economising the time of the angler, and lessening the hazards which are frequently incurred by an attempt to land or bank it. In using the gaff-hook, the person employed should take care not to come into contact with the line, and keep well out of sight, until an opportunity occurs of stretching his weapon over the fish. He should then jerk the point into its body, no matter what part of it, and haul in rapidly. Some gaff-

hooks are furnished with a small scythe or pruning-blade, which is intended for cutting through any weeds or branches that may happen to interfere with the tackle in landing. This appendage will be found of more service in pike than salmon-fishing. Instead of the gaff, a small hoop-net is sometimes used to take in exhausted fish. It is especially of advantage in angling for trout from a boat, or even when wading in a broad stream, where, without its assistance, one has to march to shore with every half-pounder he hooks, or else to incur the increased risk of its escape, should he attempt to haul it up within grasp.

**WAX.**—A good transparent wax, useful for dressing flies and other purposes, may be made as follows:—

Dissolve over a slow fire, in a pipkin or other suitable vessel, 2 oz. of the best light-coloured yellow resin. Let them simmer for ten minutes, then add  $2\frac{1}{2}$  drachms of white pomatum, and allow the whole to simmer a quarter of an hour longer, constantly stirring it. Pour the ingredients, thus mixed, into a basin of clean cold water, and they will assume a thick transparent consistency; knead the wax well, while yet warm, by drawing it out with the fingers till cold. The last operation gives it toughness and silvery opacity. Another useful dressing wax may be made from the following ingredients:—

Black pitch, . . .	1 oz.		Diachylum, . . .	1 oz.
Bees'-wax, . . .	1 oz.		Fine resin, . . .	2 oz.

I do not think it necessary to enter into further details regarding tackle, &c., in this chapter. What remains to be said is treated of more appropriately as I proceed.

**ANGLER'S EQUIPMENT.**—There is no material that I am acquainted with more suitable, as respects colour, warmth, and durability, for the general dress of the angler, than properly manufactured Scotch plaiding. It has this advantage to boot, that it dries quickly, after immersion in water or exposure to rain; and from the varieties of pattern it embraces, there is always sufficient scope for a display of taste on the part of the selector.

I would recommend that the coat and trousers be usually fabricated of this article. In the spring season, however, a dress of warmer texture is often found essential; and there are fifty stuffs, suitable for cold weather, on the

shelves of every clothier, which the most fastidious of our fraternity could not object to wear. But I have no design to interfere with the taste or tailor of any man, and shall, therefore, refrain from entering into details upon this matter, or giving directions as to how a fishing-jacket ought to be made and furnished, or what description of head-covering the angler should use. With regard, however, to what, strictly speaking, forms the equipment of our craft, apart from rod and tackle, I think it requisite to offer a few observations. First of all, then, as to an article which, in many localities, it is almost essential for the angler to possess—I mean

WADING BOOTS.—It is quite true that, in my younger days, I regarded these a cumbersome and unnecessary part of my equipment, and so they would prove in all pedestrian excursions, undertaken by juvenile anglers, in the heyday of health and vigour; but as one becomes sobered down, and more chary of his exertions, he not only reconciles himself to their use, but actually feels out of place in their absence. To a salmon-fisher who has no boat at command, and who, to obtain sport, requires to plunge knee-deep in the element, during the months of March and April, as well as October, in seasons, in fact, when the temperature is by no means high, they are absolutely necessary; and even to the trout-fisher, in May and June, who is liable to suffer from habitual exposure to wet, they constitute a desirable means of protection. I need not, therefore, to recommend them as an article of expediency, the more especially as the various inventions and improvements of the age render them of easy acquisition, and that at a cost more moderate than a rheumatic attack, or even a twinge of toothache, coupled severally with doctors' and dentists' fees.

It would be quite superfluous were I to enumerate the different descriptions of India-rubber wading boots, which, from time to time, have been submitted to my inspection. I am not partial to wares fabricated of such slender material as the generality of these happen to be, and prefer instead a sturdy, workman-like pair of leg-defenders, such as are worn by the Berwick fishermen and those of our principal salmon rivers. There is no necessity, however, that wading boots of this description, to last well, and

answer all the purposes of the angler, should be nearly so coarse and heavy as those manufactured to resist damage from salt-water and incessant usage. They ought not, in fact, to weigh more, when properly ironed, than eight or nine pounds. To maintain leathern wading boots in good order, it is necessary they should be used every now and then, or filled with water, and allowed to stand an hour or two in this condition. The leather also ought to be kept soft and pliant, for which purpose I recommend the use of the following mixture—the materials named to be melted together above a slow fire, and applied, when cool, by means of a paint-brush or rag to the surface :—

1 pint of neat's-foot oil.	2 oz. of yellow wax.
2 oz. of turpentine.	1 oz. of Burgundy pitch.

Before pulling on the boots, draw a large-sized worsted stocking over the trousers.

The above recipe is of tried value ; but as neat's-foot oil is not always easily obtained, I subjoin another preparation :—

1 pint of linseed oil.	2 oz. of best tar.
4 oz. of bees'-wax.	2 oz. of Burgundy pitch.
2 oz. of spirits of turpentine.	

Melt all slowly together.

Curriers' dubbing, also, is sometimes employed. For summer fishing, Macintosh's waterproof stockings may be recommended. Attention to the thorough drying of these, inside as well as out, after use, cannot be too strictly paid, otherwise they will quickly rot and become unserviceable.

FISHING-BOOK.—It is astonishing what fancies some anglers entertain in respect to their tackle. They accumulate hank after hank of gut, gross after gross of flies, a whole bolster charge of feathers, and an anchor weight of hooks, without for one moment considering the damage done by age, moths, and corrosion, and the unlikelihood of their ever existing to employ all this amassed hoard of fishing gear. No doubt, these whimsical enthusiasts draw a world of satisfaction from the review of their varied accumulations, and love to expatiate upon the merits of this or that contrivance ; the shade of a hackle, or the shape of a hook, forming with them sufficient subject of discourse

for more time than they have spent in testing the advantages of either the one or the other. I confess I have but little sympathy with men of this humour, and have always met with the most efficient and sterling anglers in those who possess a simple but select stock, intermixed with nothing doubtful or new-fangled in the shape of tackle—the gut hank fresh and clean—the hooks free from rust—the flies recently dressed—the pocket-book ample in size, yet not crowded in its contents—everything having elbow-room, and being in its proper place.

The angler's trout-book, in order to give suitable accommodation to the tackle required, should measure at least eight inches in length, by five and a half in breadth. The number and arrangement of the divisions and cases are pure matters of taste, upon which no remarks need be offered. For salmon flies, I would recommend a pocket-book of still larger dimensions, and instead of vellum, let there be introduced divisions of flannel moderately fine. These, in fact, should be glued on, or otherwise affixed to strong parchment, and the rest, in stitching up, disposed of betwixt them. By the adoption of this plan, the salmon-fisher is enabled to arrange a large stock of fly-hooks, one by one, over a comparatively small space; he can distribute them, according to his fancy, equally throughout the various divisions, so that this portion of the pocket-book, when closed, shall not press too heavily upon that, and thus tend to injure the wings or general dressing of the flies: moreover, he has access, at a few glances, to the whole collection, and when induced to substitute one hook for another, does not require to consume time in ransacking his cases for the necessary fly, but can detect and extricate it without the slightest delay. The introduction of a square of chamois leather, formed into two leaves, is recommended as a useful addition to the pocket-book of the salmon-fisher. It is intended to receive fly-hooks when wetted, and, by absorbing the moisture they contain, deprive the wires and tinsels of all tendency to contract rust or other injury.

**TIN BOX.**—Although not generally so convenient as a pocket-book, an oblong or circular box of tin is better adapted, in some respects, to hold tackle, especially trout-flying flies made up into casts, salmon hooks, the wings of

which are otherwise liable to be crushed, and casting lines of all descriptions.

This box may be constructed to open with a hinge on both sides. If circular, it should measure four and a half inches in diameter; if oblong, as many in breadth, the depth, in either case, being two or two and a half inches. Slips of white paper, fitted to shape, ought to be placed in the interior, for the purpose, as they are required, of dividing the contents.

Of the remainder of the angler's equipment, it is unnecessary to say much. With regard to the creel or pannier, few improvements, that I am aware of, have recently taken place. More attention perhaps, than formerly, is now paid to its shape, which has been considerably elongated, the depth reduced, and the curve behind increased, so as to fit close to the back of the wearer; but in point of material, no changes have occurred. It is essential to the enjoyment of the trout-fisher, that this part of his equipment be kept always clean. During summer, a few handfuls of moist grass, or a wet cloth, will aid, both to effect this object, and to preserve, until the expiry of his day's sport, the fine tints and fresh appearance of the fish captured.

The angler, for his own satisfaction, ought to provide himself with a patent spring weighing-machine. This instrument is now made so small, that it can be carried, without giving any inconvenience, in one's waistcoat pocket; at the same time, it will indicate the weight of fish captured with great exactness.

Among the usual necessary preparations for a fishing excursion, the following articles, in addition to those which fall under the denomination of fishing gear, may be enumerated:—A pocket-knife, having two or more blades, several yards of good twine or cord, a piece of dressing wax, silk thread, one or more floats, several leads or split pellets of shot, a pair of small scissors, a point or needle, all of which may be packed into a small compass, and carried without causing the smallest inconvenience. A spirit-flask also takes its place among the items essential for such an occasion, well primed with what all fishers know to be a potent preventative of colds, rheumatisms, and other maladies—namely, good whisky. To haters of ardent

spirits, Oxley's essence of ginger may be recommended as an excellent substitute.

As a general advice, in concluding this chapter with regard to tackle, the angler, before committing lines and flies to his box or pocket-book, should always take care that they are properly dried ; for which purpose it is recommended that he dispose of them about his hat or hat-band, on changing his tackle or leaving the river. He ought also, especially if it be a salmon one, and, in consequence of rain, soaked to the centre, to unwind his line from the reel or winch, and lay it up, in loose coils, over the back of a chair or peg, until thoroughly freed from moisture. Mixtures of hair and silk retain the wet much longer than lines manufactured of hair alone, and in consequence, they will rot more readily, on the above precaution being neglected or but partially acted upon.



## CHAPTER III.

### FLY-DRESSING.

I FIND it impossible, by means of a few cursory directions, to make the art of fly-dressing sufficiently intelligible to the reader. In order to become an adept, he requires to be instructed, not by book, but by practice ; nor should he trust slavishly to the method of this or that artist, but allow room for the exercise of his own taste and ingenuity, especially in the selection of feathers and dubbing for salmon hooks. Before venturing to describe the process generally followed in dressing the artificial fly, I shall jot down, as a matter of course, the materials useful to the general dresser, enlarging upon them here and there, as I think it expedient.

### MISCELLANEOUS ARTICLES.

1. Hooks, Philips and Adlington, of all sizes.
2. Gut dyed and of its natural colour, both salmon and trouting descriptions.
3. Nippers, of thick wire, brass or iron.
4. A pair of fine scissors, curved at the points.
5. Silk threads of various degrees of fineness, colour, and shade.
6. Floss silks to correspond, wound up on small bobbins.
7. Phial of fine spirit varnish.
8. Wax.
9. Dubbings, pigs-wool, mohair, wools and worsteds of all shades and colours, muscle silk, hare-lug, water-rat skin, combings of cow-hair, &c. &c.
10. Tinsels, gold and silver, flat, corded, and fretted, of various breadths.
11. Wing-divider or point.
12. Feathers for trout flies, among which may be principally mentioned—

## FEATHERS FOR TROUT FLIES.

Wings of Woodcock.	Feathers of Grey-hen.
„ Landrail.	„ Pheasant.
„ Snipe.	„ Partridge (hackles and tail.)
„ Thrush.	„ Mallard (back and breast.)
„ Lark.	„ Teal.
„ Starling.	„ Starling (hackles.)
„ Blackbird.	„ Golden plover.
„ Dotterel.	„ Lapwing (crest hackles.)
„ Wren.	„ Wren (used as hackles.)
„ Redwing.	„ Ostrich (hackles.)
„ Bunting.	Hackles of the barn-door cock.
Feathers of Grouse.	

## FEATHERS FOR SALMON FLIES.

Turkey, all varieties, including White and double-white tops from rump.	Snipe, pencilled feather under wing.
Duns and dun-white tops.	Salmon-tailed glead.
Mottles, streaks, and pure white.	Capercaillie.
Silver pheasant, male and female, tail and wing feathers, pencilled and mottled.	Mallard and teal feathers mottled.
Golden pheasant, crest, tippet, and tail.	Domestic drake, white tops from wing, &c.
Argus of Sumatra.	Raven.
Jungle cock.	Guinea-fowl.
Jay, blue feathers on the wing.	Wood-duck of America.
Blue lowrie of Australia.	Bustard.
Blue and buff macaw, tail, &c.	Heron, male bird, pendant breast feathers, &c.
Green ditto.	Ostrich.
Parrots, for tail tufts, red and yellow, &c., paroquets.	Java dove.
King-fishers.	Cormorant.
White top from mallard wing.	Bittern.
Swan.	Peacock.
	Common pheasant, (hackles from neck and sides.)
	Domestic cock.—&c. &c.

In addition to the above stock, the fly-dresser ought to provide himself with a good and ample selection of hackles from the head, neck, and side of the barn-door fowl, the male bird especially. Black, dark brown, red, dun, yellow, white, grizzled, ought to be included in this selection; and along with hackles of natural colour, an assortment of dyed ones may judiciously be kept. These should embrace all the brilliant colours, orange, flame-red, fine yellows, purples, blues and greens of every description, as well as such of the more sombre hues as are not possessed by the natural feather.

**DYEING OF WOOL AND FEATHERS.**—In dyeing wool or feathers, use an earthen vessel or crucible, as metallic pans have a tendency, especially when metallic or earthy mordants are employed, to injure the quality of the colour. Make use, also, of soft river-water, and stir with a piece of clean wood.

Of earthy mordants employed in dyeing, the simplest and most useful is common alum. Acetate of alumina, a double decomposition of alum and sugar of lead, is also in high esteem ; but the metallic mordants, especially the oxide of tin or proto-chloride, are more valuable. The last-mentioned ingredient, in fact, is quite essential for the fixing of fine scarlets and other bright colours.

Wool or mohair, before dyeing, should be well scoured in equal parts of urine and water.

**BLUE DYE.**—Dissolve one part of indigo in four of concentrated sulphuric acid. Add one part of dry carbonate of potash, and dilute with eight times its weight in water. The wool ought previously to be boiled in a solution with alum and tartar.

**YELLOW DYE.**—The colouring matters used in dyeing yellow, are weld, fustic, quercitron bark, and annatto. For fine yellow, employ oxide of tin as a mordant, instead of alum. Fustic and oxide of iron yield a drab colour ; and a little tartar added to the colouring matter produces a greenish hue. If orange is required, add a little cochineal. In dyeing feathers, the spirituous tincture of turmeric will impart a fine yellow, and that of any depth required ; to brighten the colour, use a little lemon juice.

Buff colours are produced by adding to a little pearl-ash, a decoction of annatto in water.

**RED DYES.**—Of these cochineal is the most valuable ; but many other drugs are used by dyers, such as logwood, Brazil wood, madder, archil, kermes, &c. In order to obtain a fine scarlet, first dye the wool yellow, and then immerse it in a vessel containing cochineal with tartar and chloride of tin. Common crimsons may be produced from alum and cochineal ; and if required of a pale caste, a little madder ought to be added. To obtain purple, make an infusion of logwood, one handful of shavings to the pint of water ; and after the wool has been boiled in it

half an hour, put in a tea-spoonful of carbonate of potash, also a small piece of copperas the size of a pea.

**BLACK DYES.**—These are produced from red oxide of iron and tan; logwood being used as an auxiliary. Boil the wool two hours in a decoction of nut-galls, and allow it to simmer the same space of time in a vessel with logwood and sulphate of iron at a scalding, not boiling heat; frequently exposing it to the air for the purpose of absorbing oxygen. The proportions of the ingredients are—

Gall-nuts,	.	.	1 part.		Logwood,	.	.	6 parts.
Sulphate of iron,	.	.	1 do.		Wool,	.	.	20 do.

**BROWN DYE.**—The best ingredient, and one requiring no mordant, is walnut rinds. A handful of these, along with a small quantity of logwood, boiled together for half an hour in a pint of water, will give out a good brown colour. A piece of copperas the size of a small nut boiled in a pint of water with red hackles, will much improve and darken their appearance.

Green, orange, purple, and olives, are, properly speaking, compound colours.

Green is produced by mixing blue and yellow; orange, by mixing red and yellow; purple, by mixing red and blue: for instance, cochineal with sulphate of indigo. Olives are produced by mixtures of blue, red, and yellow. To obtain greys and duns, dye with oxide of iron and use quercitron, or sumach, to give them a yellow tinge.

In dyeing wools, the time they require in boiling is regulated by the strength and nature of the dyeing ingredients and mordants. In some cases, two hours are necessary in order to fix the colours; in others, twenty minutes will suffice. After boiling, rinse the material in cold water and spread it out to dry. In connection with the dyeing of feathers, it is worthy of observation, that feathers damaged by crumpling will, when immersed in hot water, completely recover their original beauty.

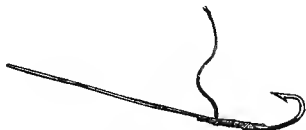
**IN DRESSING TROUTING HOOKS,** I pursue the following method. My intention, for instance, is to complete a dozen fly-hooks. Accordingly, in commencing arrangements, I select from a hank of fine gut, twelve choice threads. These I prepare by clipping off with a pair of

fine scissors the ragged extremities, and by straightening the lengths with my fingers ; I then place them together on a table before me, and proceed next to lay out, and at hand, an equal number of hooks of the sizes intended to be dressed, along with nippers, resin, &c. ; after which, I cut and wax a dozen portions of fine silk thread, varying in length, according to the size and description of the fly-hook in contemplation, say from eight to fourteen inches. The colours I prefer are orange, yellow, straw-tinted, and crimson ; but as to this matter I am more indifferent than with regard to the quality of the silk, which cannot, if it possesses sufficient strength to take on the wax without giving way, be too fine.

I now open my repository of feathers and hackles, placing before me the required number of the latter or a small quantity of prepared dubbing instead. My next step is to make ready and lay out, in convenient order, the wings of the intended fly-hooks. In detaching these from the feather, I do not, like many fly-dressers, use knife or scissors, but generally strip them off by means of my thumb and forefinger. Such, I allow, is not the most economical mode of procedure, but it embraces this advantage, that it preserves to the fibres or strips of feather composing each individual wing, their co-adhesive power, so that, on tying on the wings, less derangement or separation of the parts is liable to take place ; for although the fibres of some feathers are naturally linked to each other all along, to the very rim or extremity, others, especially those of the mallard and birds of soft and oily plumage, have but a small measure of this peculiarity, and depend, as the principle of their connection, chiefly upon the roots or lower ends of the fibres in question.

Having assorted and paired off the wings, as well as arranged, and made ready the hackles, dubbing, &c., I proceed forthwith to accomplish the dressing. This I commence, by lifting one of the hooks with the thumb and forefinger of my left hand, and applying at the same time to its shank the requisite length of gut. These, by means of one of the waxed silk-threads, above mentioned, I firmly unite together, commencing about the centre of the shank, and turning the silk over them, at least four or five times, in an upward direction, towards its head or extremity. I

then fasten with a single hitch-knot. The hook, &c., will appear thus :



Having cut off the superfluous gut, I now proceed to fasten on the wings. These, which lie paired before me, I lift together, their heads pressed close betwixt the thumb and forefinger of my right hand, and the inner sides of the feather of which each happens to be formed, turned face to face.

I then place them in their proper position, over the head and shank of the hook, substituting, as I do so, the corresponding fingers of the left hand, in order to keep all fast. This done, I take up the portion of waxed silk hanging below, and give it two, or at most three turns, over the root of the feathers, gut, and wire-shank ; then, without fastening, bring it over, betwixt the intended wings (which, if pressed together during one of the above operations, so as in a manner to adhere to each other, I divide with a fine point, such as that of a needle or penknife), and running it below them, fetch it up again, in the form of a cross.



In making large fly-hooks, when it is desirable that the wings stand well apart from each other, I sometimes repeat this part of the process, recrossing the silk thread betwixt them. Having cut off the superfluous ends of feather, I now form the head. This is done simply by continuing to wrap the silk over the extremity of the

hook shank, above the wings, until what remains of the fag portions or roots is concealed and made secure. I now bring down the thread and fasten it, with a simple hitch-knot underneath.

The wings being finished, I have only to complete the fly, by the affixing and laying on of the hackle or dubbing; these materials sufficing, either in their separate or joint capacity, to represent both the legs and body of the insect. In the case of simply attaching and running on a hackle, I require, first of all, to lift one of the assorted feathers of this description previously placed within reach, and laying the root end towards the bend of the hook, so that the fibred or unstript portion has its position in immediate conjunction with the wings at the point of fastening, to cast round it the dressing thread already employed, having carefully re-waxed it for the purpose. I then continue the wrapping so far down the shank of the hook as it is my intention to bring the hackle. This done, I take hold with my nippers of the fine end of the feather, and commence, close under the wings of the fly, to wind it on. Four or five turns generally suffice to fetch it down to the desired point, when, having cast the silk thread round it twice for security, I either twitch off the tip with my nippers, or cut it close with the scissors. A succession of hitch-knots, or, what is preferable, the common whip fastening, concludes the process.

Hackles, in the case of the trouting fly, may either be carried down nearly the whole length of the shank, to where the turn of the wire commences, or else, for variety's sake, confined immediately under the wing, so as to resemble only the legs of the insect. When so applied, it is expedient, in some cases, to complete the body by the addition, either of a little floss silk or of dubbing taken from a hare's ear, water-rat skin, &c. In putting on dubbing, take care to twist it well up with the dressing thread, by means of the thumb and forefinger, before commencing to form the body. It should be applied, as well as the hackle, very sparingly. I cannot reconcile myself to the taste for bushy flies, exhibited by some anglers. As imitations of the natural insect, they are caricatures at the best, and although not refused on general occasions by hungry and hasty fish, are nevertheless ill adapted, from the cir-

cumstance of the barb of the hook being choked and muffled up, to strike and secure them.

No trouting flies, used purely as such, on most of our Scottish rivers, are a whit the better of tinsel. To adopt an intermixture, however, of gold and silver thread in the body of loch flies is generally advisable, on those lochs especially, such as Loch Tummel, Ledgowan, Ness, &c., where the trout are of a large description. Tinsel, I may also state, is a favourite addition to the materials of sea-trout, whitling, or finnock fly-hooks. This is not, be it remarked, a general rule; for the fish alluded to, in clear waters, will often prefer a plain dark-hackled fly of small dimensions, to one that is gaudy, or seemingly apportioned in size to their weight and feeding powers.

Although the method of dressing a trouting fly above described is the one I generally adopt, and such as for many years I have found to be at once expeditious and satisfactory, still there are artists of great skill and merit who fashion their lures upon quite a different system; nor, in fact, does there exist any fixed scroll of regulations for the fly-dresser to hold by. No doubt, it is quite allowable for him to experimentalise a certain length, and vary, not merely his materials, but his mode of putting them together: for instance, instead of finishing off at the body or tail of the insect, he may do so, more tastefully, at the head or with the wings; he may also, by way of change, leave the wings undivided, or append them so as to turn over, and thus maintain a more upright and life-like position when drawn along the water's surface.

But while conceding, in this respect, to the fly-dresser, I must maintain that there is no real service done to the angler, as regards trouting flies, by a multiplication of their names and varieties, or by useless disquisitions upon certain virtues peculiar to this or that imitation; nay, further, I regard as unessential and elaborately trifling, the attempts made by many theoretical writers on the subject of angling, to sort out and classify, according to the month, the different ephemeral and water insects which they think it necessary should be included in the stock of the fly-fisher. I am of opinion that, with a hare-lug, a brown and a black hackle—these three—it being a matter of indifference whether the wing adapted to them is formed



of the brown mallard, the woodcock, landrail, or grouse feather, or, indeed, whether the hackles are provided with wings at all—I express my belief, founded on the experience of nearly thirty years, that, with the three simple fabrications above mentioned, accommodating them in point of size to the season and state of water, trout can be captured, and that as readily as by means of the most slavish and subtle imitation of the natural insect, from any river or loch throughout Scotland. In my chapter upon trouting flies, these observations will be found considerably enlarged upon, explained, and applied.

It now remains for me to say something relative to the dressing of salmon flies. This is a subject involving such a variety of practice, and so much detail, that to attempt the discussion of it in full is quite beyond my intention. The task, fortunately, is not required, and I shall therefore confine myself to a very few remarks, which, if they do not bear so immediately upon the matter in question as to expound and illustrate it, may, nevertheless, be admitted to possess some connection therewith.

First of all, as to the dressing of the Scotch salmon-fly. It is generally imagined that, because of its sober, if not homely look, the fabrication of this lure is a matter of no difficulty in comparison with the fabrication of an Irish killer, such as the Doctor, or any other well-known magnet. I admit the materials are not so costly, nor, in many cases, nearly so numerous; still there are points in the dressing of the former, which, in order to make it please the eye, require more nicety of execution, as well as the exercise of more taste and discrimination than are necessary to be employed in the construction of the latter. Among these is the proper adaptation and tying on of the wings, the selection of the hackles and dubbing, the harmonising of the colours, the meting out and apportioning to its special purpose the quantity of each material. True, all these matters command considerable attention on the part of the Irish fly-dresser, but he is relieved by the showiness of floss, feather, and tinsel, from the necessity of exercising anything like that degree of taste which the working with dull and sombre colours calls forth; and in the case of the wings, he is not hampered with one tithe of the difficulty which attends the neat adjustment and fixing

on of these appendages, severally and without break of fibre, all of which is requisite in regard to most of the Scottish salmon flies.

Still, in either capacity, whether as a dresser of Irish or Tweed flies, it is essential, if aspiring to excellence, that the artist be endowed with a tasteful and correct eye—the eye, in some measure, of a painter, who can understand the arrangement and mutual relation of colours to each other; he must also possess the ready use of his fingers, so as to be able to execute delicate and minute work, to give, as it were to a spider's thread, the sufficiency of a strong cord, to conceal and varnish over all breaks and finishes, so that the entirety of the performance may, in a manner, challenge or defy question.

I could introduce by name to the reader a great number of excellent fly-dressers, as well amateurs as professional hands, but shall confine myself to the mention of two or three among the latter, the superiority of whose style of dressing, as regards salmon-hooks, is well known and appreciated by the frequenters of our Scottish rivers. Among these stands foremost Mr Forrest of Kelso, a most able and ingenious artificer in every department relating to angling, and one whose stock of materials, gut, wire, wood, feathers, &c., can be relied on as fresh, and of the best description. As a manufacturer of salmon rods, Mr F. is unsurpassed. His fly-hooks are fabrications which merit special notice. I do not hesitate to place them on a level with the best productions of Blacker and Evatt. They are characterised by a display of great taste, and, when required, an extreme attention to detail in what may be termed minor points; at the same time, they can be relied on for durability beyond any in the kingdom. I recently handled a fly-hook dressed by Mr F., after the Childers pattern, which in the hands of the late Lord W. Beresford had actually lured to bank, in a Norwegian river, thirty salmon; and yet, notwithstanding its hard service, the dressing remained unimpaired, not a thread or fibre loose or broken—the feathers, hackle, dubbing, tinsel, all as sound to appearance as ever.

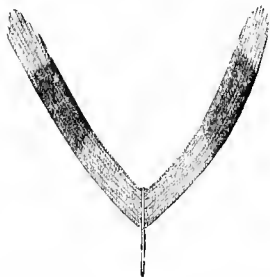
Being a practical fisher, Mr Forrest is not dependent, like many crack *artistes*, upon the pattern; at the same time, his original conceptions are always trustworthy, and,

were they collected together, would form a valuable addition to the fly stock of the general salmon-fisher. His sons, and James Wright of Sprouston, also deserve honourable mention, as excellent fly-dressers belonging to the district. At the Great Exhibition, in the fishing-tackle department, the fly-hooks which bore the palm were those dressed by Roderick Anderson, fishing-tackle maker in Dunkeld, and his daughters. They were very creditable productions, and greatly excelled those of London manufacture.

As regards the salmon-fly, one great improvement, of recent date, consists in the substitution, as a mode of attaching it to the line, of a small loop or eyehole of gut at the head or shank-end of the hook, instead of a full length of the same material. This loop, as in the case of the length in question, may be formed either of triple or of single gut, according to the size of the wire. It is of advantage in at least two respects: first, its adoption renders an assortment of salmon-flies capable of being carried without crushing or disarranging their plumage; and again, while hooks tied on the length or strand are apt to become chafed or weakened at the neck, or to crack off altogether, the substitution of the loop prevents this evil—for, should the strand it was originally fitted to appear worn or damaged, one has only to remove it and attach a new one in its stead. The loop in question ought, on every occasion, to be made as small as possible, just sufficient to admit the passing and repassing of a triple or single gut length through the eyehole.

In the dressing of Scottish salmon-flies, there are two modes of laying on the wings, before fastening. They may be set either horizontally, the one with the other, as they are placed in the moth, the bee, common house-fly, and various other insects, or in such a manner that they shall correspond, in point of position, with the wings of the butterfly and of the generality of water ephemeræ—that is, with their inner sides turned face to face, at a considerable angle of elevation from the body. The mode first described is, I find, preferred to the other by many salmon-fishers, because, say they, the horizontal position of the wings assists in giving buoyancy to the hook, enabling one to hang it with more effect over the fish, especially in currents

of sluggish rate, or in dead water under an uncertain breeze. At the same time, to set the wings so as to retain this position requires greater address and attention on the part of the fly-dresser, and is, in fact, a good test of his skill and proficiency. In tying on the wings of a salmon hook, care should be taken not to break or disarrange the slips of feather of which each wing is separately composed. Some feathers, such as the brown mottled ones taken from the back of the mallard, are less adhesive than others, and consequently more liable to become disarranged. The hold which the slips in question possess seems, in this feather, to exist merely at the root ; the portion in demand therefore for the formation of the wing requires to be stripped away from its support with the thumb and fore-finger, whereas, in the case of a turkey or silver pheasant tail-feather, the wing may be cut off and shaped with more neatness and economy by means of a sharp pen-knife. Rump-feathers—those of the turkey especially—and some tail and breast ones taken from other birds, admit of being readily shaped out into connected pairs, so as to form horizontal wings, corresponding accurately together in point of colour, mark or mottle, and length of slip or fibre. These, in the tying on, give the dresser less trouble than when he has to work with detached slips.



Of mixed wings in Irish fly-hooks, all that is necessary to be said I have incorporated in my chapter on salmon-flies, among the general observations appended to a list, there introduced, of Irish favourites. The dubbing, hackle, tinsels, &c., employed in the construction of our standard

killers, are also treated of in the same chapter, and I shall not at present fatigue the reader by enlarging upon these subjects.

To enthusiasts in the art of fly-dressing, I would recommend the perusal of a small volume by Blacker of London, well-known as a proficient in the tying of hooks. It enters, I think, fully into every branch of the subject, and the illustrations which accompany it are executed with great spirit and fidelity.

## CHAPTER IV.

## TROUTING FLIES.

THE fastidiousness of many anglers with respect to their trouting flies has always occasioned me astonishment. How frequently, in my fishing excursions, do I meet with those who, exulting in the possession of five or six dozen varieties of insect imitations, consume the prime portion of the day in testing their attractive powers, now unlooping one, because it is, they opine, a shade too dark, now another on account of its want of tinsel, attaching in turn the latest urban conceit redoubted as a killer, the fail-me-never of some sporting parson or half-pay hero.

What, I naturally ask, are the notions of such anglers with respect to the tastes, or, it may be, the optics of the trout? Do they suppose this fish, in regard to its surface food, so singularly capricious as to refuse all others but the insect of the day, so whimsical as even to resist the claims of hunger itself, unless wrought on by the appearance of some peculiarly streaked water-fly? Do they fancy it discriminative of every shade or hue in the wing, body, and feelers of its prey?—keenly sensible of the smallest deviation in colour, more so than of a defect in shape, from the natural insect? If such their conclusions, I cannot help affirming that they give credit to the fish in question for possessing a power of discrimination, not less than a degree of daintiness, altogether extraordinary. I am not, however, denying that to a certain extent their conclusions are correct. The error lies in their being over-drawn. The trout, confessedly, is a capricious feeder, circumspect in its habits, and possessed of great quickness of eye, as well as

an acute sense of smell ; but that it holds these properties in such measure as to require not only the utmost skill, but the greatest choice and variety of fly-tackle, in order to capture it, is a position, with regard at least to our Scottish rivers, altogether untenable.

The experience of nearly thirty years has led to the conviction, on my part, that a stock consisting of three, or at most four, diversities of trouting flies, is quite sufficient to insure success at all seasons on any of our lakes and streams. I am talking of diversities, and, in doing so, allude to the colour, shape, and material of the imitation employed, not at all to its size ; *that* I leave to be regulated wholly by circumstances, such, for instance, as the season of the year, the low or flooded state of the water, calms or winds, &c.

The fly-stock of the trout-fisher may then, I opine, in point of colour, be restricted without detriment to :—

1. The red or brown hackle, with or without wings.
2. The black hackle,           ditto,           ditto.
3. The hair-lug or water-mouse body, with wings.

These, as noted down, are essentially the groundwork of a killing fly-stock. They are the elements most requisite in the construction of those lures which pedant authors on angling have chosen to dignify with entomological names, and, by the addition as well as substitution of other materials, increase and vary to such a degree, that all count of what really is a taking and trustworthy fly is overwhelmed in their teeming and bulky store page.

The above simplification, however, of a fly-stock, is not introduced by me, as one which I propose to be adopted or even to run greatly counter to general ideas on the subject. It is an enumeration, merely, of certain constituent elements in the construction of the lure, which, whenever used, I have found to be inviting. Indeed, I may safely affirm that, on every Scottish stream and loch, one or other of the flies above specified may, in the absence of others, be employed with a fair measure of success ; the sizes, of course, as before observed, being regulated by the condition of the water, the state of the season, weather, and other influences.

And as to the wings which, at option—for they are not absolutely necessary—may be used as appendages to the hackle flies, I would recommend them, in the case of the brown or red hackle, to be taken from the snipe, starling, or brown-speckled feather found on the back of the mallard; in the case of the black hackle, to be constructed of grouse, woodcock, landrail, or speckled breast-feather either of the teal or wild drake. When used on lochs, in dull windy weather, a streak of tinsel or gold thread wound over the body of the lure will be found, in regard to the larger descriptions of hackle flies, of some little service, especially where good-sized fish abound, or when there are chances of obtaining sea-trout.

The silk thread employed in the fabric of the fly should, on general occasions, be pretty freely exposed, especially below the hackle, and as it approaches the bend of the hook. It may be used of various colours; but by far the most accordant and captivating, when exposed, are yellow and orange. Crimson, blue, green, and even white thread can be employed, however, without detriment to the sport, on many occasions; while dull, mixed hues are seldom or never rejected.

And now, with regard to the hackle itself. This I consider a matter of some little importance, not as concerns its exact tint or shade of colour, (for, along with what is unquestionably black or unquestionably brown, regard may be paid justly enough, though in a less degree, to those more dubious hues denominated by anglers, ginger, chocolate, dun, grizzle, &c.) but with respect to its shape, fibre, and quality. These points I cannot help reckoning worthy of some measure of consideration. Disregarding them, the neatest-handed fly-dresser will produce but a clumsy piece of craft-work, uninviting to the eye of the angler, and thereby, as a matter of consequence—seeing it will be used with distrust—unlikely to do much execution among trout.

The selection of the hackle, then, requires considerable care and knowledge. Not one cock in ten, walking the farmyard, yields feathers of this description, truly available to the angler. They are generally found to be too stiff and long in the fibre—seldom prettily tapered—and, when colour is brought into consideration, perpetually at a dis-



count. The annexed is a sample of what may be reckoned, in point of shape, a good trouting hackle.



Birds yielding such feathers, although infrequent, may always, with a little exertion on the part of the fancier, be picked up and purchased. The hackles themselves ought to be selected about or after the middle of winter, before, at least, any symptoms of moulting take place. Those pulled from an old cock are often too wiry and stiff for use. Herls from the plover's crest, and the neck of the male starling, will be found excellent substitutes for the hackles of the barn-fowl in the manufacture of small dark-coloured flies; indeed, feathers of many descriptions, and from a great variety of birds, are useful for this purpose. The ostrich and peacock furnish, in their way, valuable herls; but an admirable resemblance to the legs, feelers, and body of the insect may be constructed, by lovers of variety, from the neck-feather of the partridge.

Having thus treated of those lures in which the hackle forms an important item, I proceed to notice the hare's-ear fly, commonly, in Scotland, denominated the hare-lug. The virtues possessed by this imitation have long been known, and are generally appreciated. For my own part, as a purely trouting-fly, I hold it in higher regard than I do the hackle itself. On waters much thrashed, and where the fish have become shy and cunning, it is infinitely more serviceable; on the Tyne, for instance, in East Lothian, &c. &c.; also, during summer, on lochs and rivers slightly reduced by drought. The wing used with it may, as in the case of the hackle, be varied according to taste. I prefer that formed of the woodcock feather, when dressed on a good-sized hook; but the snipe, landrail, and brown mallard furnish excellent substitutes.

A very killing lure for trout may also be fabricated, by surmounting a twitch of the hare's-ear with the hackle of the partridge or grouse, taking care that the fibres of the latter be of moderate length, just exceeding that of the hook itself. This, by some anglers, is termed the spider-

fly, and should be used as a stretcher at the extremity of the line. On gleamy days at the commencement of June, when trout, in our southern rivers, are apt to prove lazy, I have found it very successful, especially on the lower parts of Tweed, near Kelso.

A good hare-lug will provide body-material for several dozens of flies, and that of various shades and complexions, from a swarthy black on to a dingy white. The back or furry part of the ear, however, is that which, in point of colour, is most acceptable to the fly-dresser. Excellent moth or night flies are also fabricated from its lighter portions.

Classed with this material, so valuable to the angler, I may mention the furs of the water-rat, the mouse, weasel, squirrel, monkey, opossum, combings of a red cow, &c., all of which are made use of in fly-dressing. As to their attractive qualities, however, there is no necessity for saying much. I certainly hold in some esteem the pile of the first-mentioned animal; but its equivalent may always be discovered in the substance just treated of, which, although differing equally in colour and texture, will be found, in the same state of water, quite as effective.

I shall now treat shortly of the description of hooks most serviceable to the fly-fisher, their sizes, and the adaptation of these to the humour of the fish, the forwardness of the season, and state of water. And first, as to the description of wire best adapted for hooking and securing trout. I have already, in a former chapter, approached closely to this subject, while discussing, in a general manner, the merits of the article, as manufactured in various parts of the kingdom. Without giving the absolute superiority to either, I have, in the place alluded to, divided my recommendations pretty equally betwixt what is called the round-bend, and that adopted by Philips, or the Irish form of hook. The former—the round-bend—I prefer using for all sorts of bottom and under-surface fishing; for worm, roe, and minnow tackles of every description. But I do more: I allow it the preference also, and that decidedly, as a ground-work for the smaller kinds of flies; not that it possesses even half the strength of a properly-tempered Irish hook, but, in shape, it is much better adapted than the other, both to fasten upon the lip of the

fish, and, what is of as much importance, when fastened, to retain its grasp. All trouting-flies, therefore, from the size 00 up to No. 5, I recommend to be dressed upon hooks of the above description. At this point, however, I find it advisable to substitute the Irish bend; the turn of the wire being now sufficient to allow a ready admission to its barbed portion through the cartilaginous parts of the fish's mouth; which accomplished, everything else, as regards the hook itself, is in favour of the substitution. It possesses, for instance, to a greater extent, the virtues of temper and durability, is more retentive of its colour, and less liable to become corroded or rust-worn. These remarks, be it observed, have no reference to the many spurious imitations of the hook in question, which crowd the general market; they are confined entirely to the best descriptions of manufactured wire, such as proceed from the hands of Philips, O'Shaughnessy, Martin Kelly, and Bartleet; and, in the case of round-bends, those made by Adlington, and other well-known Kendal manufacturers.

On quitting this subject, namely the form of hooks most serviceable to the fly-fisher, I have only to add, that the Kirby sneek-bend, and other numerous innovations upon the two established shapes above recommended, may be held as faulty. They possess, at any rate, no certain advantage over them, and, in point of temper, are generally inferior.

I am now brought to treat of the adaptation of the different sizes of hooks to the season of the year, state of the water, and humour of the fish. Upon this subject a very great deal might be said; indeed, to handle it with effect, and at the same time bring it within the desirable compass, is altogether impracticable. It would be otherwise were I to confine my observations to a single stream or locality; but, in extending them to the whole range of lochs and rivers in Scotland, they must necessarily prove defective, frequently misplaced, and, if not really inaccurate, liable at least to be thought so. I shall therefore avoid running into this error, by venturing merely a few general remarks on the subject.

Fly-hooks used early in spring ought to be of full size and body on all our main or first-class waters and many

of their branches, especially those which contain large trout, and are accessible to marine fish. On rivers like the Tweed or Tay, I recommend the use of a whitling-hook, as the trail-fly or stretcher, during March and April. This may be exchanged for one of smaller size and duller colours, during mild weather, and when the waters run low and clear. On a casting-line made up with three flies, use generally the red hackle at the extremity, attaching the others as bobs or droppers. The distance betwixt each ought to vary with the length of the rod and the width and condition of the stream. On an average, there ought to be four lengths of small single gut, carefully knotted, betwixt the trail or stretcher and the hook immediately above it; while three of the same material are sufficient to divide the droppers.

Always, in making up the fly-cast, attend to proportion. As regards the gut, this advice is particularly necessary, but it is not less so when applied to the arrangement of the hooks. The heaviest wire ought invariably to form the trail-fly; that which is lighter being disposed of, at due distance, as a bob or dropper. Attention to this rule will greatly facilitate the management of the line and tackle.

Reverting to the matter in hand—namely, the adaptation of fly-hooks, in point of size, to the seasons, state of water, &c., I have to remark, that the use of large hooks, during the early portion of spring, is on many rivers absolutely expedient. Trout in Scotland seldom rise freely before the middle of April, until, in fact, the appearance of what are termed, not very appropriately, the March-browns. These insects—which, it is well known, have their prior state of existence at the bottom of the streams and pools, and assume the winged condition only when acted on by a certain warmth of temperature—create, on their appearance, the earliest natural cravings in the fish for surface food. Accordingly, before this event takes place, the trout has no inducement to rise, except what is afforded it by the angler in the shape of an artificial fly; nor is it easily provoked from its retreat by a single imitation or two, and that unseasonably small, of what, at the proper period, it is accustomed to have offered it in amplest abundance. It is therefore in a manner

necessary, by way of bribe, to present a large-sized fly—taking care, however, that no violence is done to nature in this or any other respect. The shape, colour, and proportions of the lure ought respectively to be considered. Sometimes, it is true, in the season referred to, trout, and those of ordinary dimensions, are taken on the huge gaudy flies used for kelts and spring salmon; but to angle with such, exclusively for the purpose, and in a purely trouting stream, were absolute folly. On the occasions in question, the fish evidently seize the lure, as they do a minnow or parr-tail, not as an insect, or anything resembling one.

While recommending the use of good-sized fly-hooks during March and the early portion of April, I allow that there are several of our Scottish streams where the trout, from natural shyness and other causes, repudiate or disregard them; yet when effective, as on most lochs and rivers they unquestionably are, one great advantage they have over the lesser sizes of wire lies in their superior capacity to retain fish when hooked—a matter which some anglers affect to make light of, but one, in reality, of very considerable consequence when the contents of the creel have, at the close of the day's sport, to pass muster.

Advancing from the middle of April into the months of May and June, considerable changes, regulated chiefly by weather and state of water, will be found to take place with respect to the size of their surface food, in the tastes and inclinations of our river trout, especially in the southern districts of Scotland. The fish, during this period of the year, having left the still, deep places, betake themselves towards the streams and rapids, not yet, however, be it observed, into the true shallows and thinnest portions of the water, which they do about the middle of summer, when minnows, small-fry, and ground-bait of various sorts become abundant. Here, in the resorts first mentioned, at the necks of pools, they watch the passing of the March-browns and other flies, snatching now and then, in the intervals, at a stray insect wafted in advance of the general shower or body. The ample supply of this sort of food, now afforded them, naturally induces a measure of satiety. They begin, ere long, to play the epicure, picking and choosing only such individuals of the winged horde as suit their fancy, and rejecting with disdain those maimed

imitations wherewith the angler attempts to dazzle and ensnare them.

All this has been over and again observed by experienced fly-fishers, and it certainly is in some degree tantalising to be approached, almost to within rod's length, by numbers of feeding trout, and yet find one's-self unable to secure even half a dozen of the smallest. How then, the question occurs, is this to be obviated? Fully and efficiently it cannot, but in a certain measure I have reason to think it may, and that by the adoption of a different size and species of fly from the one astir. Instead, for instance, of an artificial March-brown, let the angler use a dark-coloured hackle or hare-lug, dressed upon No. 4 Kendal wire. On Tweed, the brown or red hackle is generally more killing; but one or other of the three flies already recommended I have found, on many occasions, a suitable remedy under the circumstances above detailed. In truth, it is but natural in the trout, half gorged by a superabundance of one species of insect, to prefer for the moment what it conceives to be a rarer and more delicate variety. Sated with and grown indifferent to the former, it is only in accordance with its instinct to resort to the latter as a novelty, or, it may be, a provocative.

On many of our streams, those especially which flow south of the Grampian range, May, as far as the fly is concerned, is the principal angling month for trout. I make no reference, at present, to loch fishing, which may be pursued with success during the whole of the summer quarter. The beginning of the above-mentioned month is generally, like the latter weeks of April, distinguished by the prevalence of the March-browns and other ephemeral insects, of what may be termed gregarious habits. These, floating on the surface in occasional swarms, influence very considerably, as I have already stated, the movements and inclinations of the fish. Among other results omitted to be mentioned, they induce them to frequent certain localities, and by their crowding into these pell-mell, the range or extent of cast becomes, in some rivers, very materially lessened. As the month, however, proceeds, the birth of the *ephemeræ* is rendered less dependent on vernal gleams and sunbursts; the days are longer, and the weather more steady and genial. Consequently, river

insects of various sorts burst into winged existence—not, as before, in simultaneous swarms, (the effect, to boot, of their long thralldom during winter,) but in gradual and almost imperceptible succession. The deeper portions of the stream are also moved by the sun to yield their measure of sustenance. Into these, and throughout the whole course and current, trout accordingly distribute themselves. Now they select, apart one from another, places of ambush—the covert of a rock, stone, bank, or tree-root, where, concealed and defended, they may watch for their fluttering victims: nor are the exposed and open channels left altogether unfrequented. Thither, too, as the day advances, resort the bolder and greedier fish, less eager after fly food than aliment of a more substantial nature, yet not unwilling, during the month we speak of, to gratify their epicurism upon such tiny and delicate morsels as from time to time are borne towards them by the current.

The sizes of hook adapted for fly-fishing throughout May are in general smaller than those used in April. They vary, of course, in different waters. On Tweed and Teviot, I have found Nos. 2 and 3 answer well; while on other streams, less, or it might be larger sizes, proved more successful.

There is one rule respecting the artificial fly the angler ought always to hold in regard. It is applicable to every season and to all waters, and is simply this. Never use small hooks when larger ones serve the purpose, and prove equally enticing. It is plain that a small wire can never have the same hold on a fish that one of greater size has. The latter, being proportionably thicker, is less apt, in playing the trout, to cut through the fleshy or grisly part of the mouth; its barb also enters deeper, and is not easily detached or thrown out by any sudden spring or exertion.

As to the imitations of what is termed the May-fly—a fly, by the by, which, like the March-brown, makes its appearance on our Scottish waters fully a month later than is indicated by its appellation—I never reckoned them very deadly. They look well enough cased up among other fancies and curiosities in one's pocket-book, but it is seldom that an experienced angler will put them to the test, knowing as he does that their chief virtue lies more

in the name than in anything else, and that, with all their acknowledged resemblance to the natural fly, in reality, as a river lure, they are, comparatively speaking, worthless and inefficient, attractive chiefly on Highland lochs, and among waters frequented by sea-trout or whitlings.

June and July are not in general, on our larger streams, greatly esteemed as fly-months. On warm nights, however, trout, and these frequently of great weight, are taken by the angler using this lure. It is not necessary for night-fishing that the artificial fly should have any definite colour, or that it be made, as many suppose, to resemble a small moth. I have found black, brown, and hare-lug flies equally as effective as white and yellow ones. Trout at night roam more freely than during the day, often forsaking the lower portions of the pool for the head and stream, and *vice versâ*. They also frequently indulge in a cruise among the shallows, and, although thus exposed, are not so ready to take alarm, as one from their general caution might conjecture, when approached by the wader. Indeed, I have captured them, in more instances than one, close to where I stood, in water agitated altogether by my own movements.

In night-fishing, two flies are sufficient to form the cast, a greater number being very apt to perplex the angler, without insuring him any accession to his sport. These, in general, should approach in their sizes to the spring hooks, and be dressed upon tried gut. During the months in question, trout, on fine evenings, immediately before and after sunset, are generally observed to rise freely at the natural fly. On such occasions, a very small black midge, No. 00, will be found attractive.

The large flesh-maggot, previously toughened in a little oatmeal, and used at night as a fly, is reckoned very deadly. The hook employed should be No. 4, 5, or 6, and have a long shank, at the bend of which is attached a piece of gut or bristle, pointing upwards, so as to prevent the bait, when run over it, from slipping back. A single turn of a fine red hackle at the head of the wire, will be found an improvement. Flesh-maggots, during the months of July and August, are much used in some localities, and fished with, both as surface and ground bait. I recollect, many years ago, finding them very



effective on the Allan water, near Dunblane, at times when the trout rose shyly and undecidedly at the artificial fly. On these occasions, I simply pointed the stretcher and droppers with the baits in question, which, no doubt acting on the strong perception of smell possessed by the trout, lent an additional attraction to the flies. In using the maggot as a ground lure, it is the practice with some anglers to bait, several hours before commencing operations, the stretch of channel intended to be fished over, and thus give an opportunity for the trout to quit their lurking-places in the vicinity, and assemble in numbers at the scene of action.

Dipping with the natural insect is also appropriate to the summer season, but is not much pursued in Scotland. On calm water, overhung with wood, I have killed occasionally large trout by this expedient. The stone-fly, or a couple of them, fixed on a small bait-hook, with projections of gut or bristle set by the tyer along the shank, to keep the insects on and in their proper position, I also know to be very deadly; but lures of this description have always their substitute in the worm itself, and are, moreover, scantily met with on many of our rivers most suited to their employment.

Although, as I have stated, the months of June and July afford but indifferent sport to the fly-fisher frequenting our larger streams, it is otherwise among hill burns and on Highland lochs. The former, during this portion of the season, and especially after a summer flood, are generally at their prime; and many of the latter also, but not all of them, claim regard from the angler. One inducement to fish at this period, is the fine condition and appearance of the trout. It must be admitted, indeed, that even still, when captured in certain localities, they are, at their best, but soft and tasteless fish—yet such occasions are comparatively rare; for in general, throughout Scotland, and more especially in our Highland lochs, they acquire, when in season, a colour, flavour, and curdiness, which the salmon itself has no pretensions to.

The fly-hooks best adapted for hill-burn fishing, are in general small, varying from No. 1 to No. 5, round-bend. After great rains, larger ones may be used advantageously. On a narrow stream, the banks of which are overgrown

with reeds, brushwood, heather, or long grass—anything, in fact, that is apt to interfere with the management of the line—I would recommend the angler to employ only two flies, and these set at a short distance from each other.

Loch flies for trout I have as yet only alluded to, nor is a great deal required to be said upon this subject. In common with river flies, they are capable of being reduced to two or three varieties. These, in their simple state, are, as before mentioned, the black hackle, the red or brown ditto, and hare-lug fly. A division however, so very primitive, when applied to loch flies is apt, I am aware, to be ridiculed and sneered at by pedants in the art; nor in fact do I intend it, in practice, to be pushed to the extreme. It is only tasteful and becoming to admit variety into the fly assortment, provided this variety be placed under proper control. When I allude therefore to the hackles in question, as forming along with the hare-lug the only flies required by the angler, I wish it to be understood that the fundamental, I do not say requisite, portion of the dressing consists of the material after which the hook is named. It cannot be denied that, in the case of the hackle fly, the wing, tinsel, and dubbing, whether of silk or wool, possess, on many occasions, an attractive influence over trout, nay, even a combination of these without hackle at all may constitute a taking lure; but what is proved by all this but that fish are allured, not on account of the close resemblance which the artificial hook is designed to have to particular insects appropriate to particular months and seasons, but from other causes of a different nature? These are size, motion, form, and colour; the latter qualification being the one upon which, by introducing certain well-tried standards, my classification, as regards the artificial fly, has been conducted.

I shall not, however, pursue this matter any further, but proceed to mention, irrespective of my own theory regarding them, the sizes and sorts of hooks best adapted for loch fishing. In the spring months and early portion of summer, large wires, Philips' C., CC., B., BB., or Adlington's 8, 9, 10, are most serviceable. Indeed, in some lochs, they continue so throughout the season. One, on an occasion, may employ even larger sizes than those mentioned, but their effect depends much on the place, the sort of

trout frequenting it, and the nature of the weather. Of what are esteemed, among anglers of my acquaintance, killing flies, on our Scottish lakes, I subjoin the following list :—

## LOCH FLIES.

1. Wings: light mottled feather, from breast of mallard.—Body and legs: black hackle over black silk, or mohair: orange tip, silver twist. (St Mary's Loch.)
2. Wings: ditto.—Body: a dark-brown hackle closely wound near the head, the lower part formed of pink or light crimson wool; no tinsel. (Lochs Ard and Chon.)
3. Wings: grouse feather.—Body: ginger hackle over dubbing of hare-lug: yellow tip touched off with a single turn of gold tinsel. (Lochs Ard, Vennachar, &c.)
4. Wings: dark grouse feather.—Body: purple mohair; black hackle, silver twist. (Loch Tummel.)
5. Wings: mottled feather from bustard.—Body: ginger hackle over orange mohair. (Loch Awe.) The tail-feather of the common pheasant is also made use of in forming the wings of this fly.
6. Wings: mottled brown feather from the mallard.—Body: brown, or black hackle wound close under the shoulder over yellow floss silk: two fibres of the wing used as tail tufts. This, the Professor, so termed after Professor Wilson of Edinburgh, is a well-known and much esteemed fly, and has been used with success on almost every Scottish lake and river.
7. Wings: white tip from wing of the mallard, or rump feather of turkey.—Body: black hackle over dark-coloured dubbing: silver tinsel, orange tail tuft. (A killing fly on lochs frequented by sea-trout.)
8. Wings: woodcock feather.—Body: reddish, dark brown silk, red or brown hackle, two or three strands of the same for tail. (Hoffland's fancy.)
9. Wings: mottled tail feather.—Body: black hackle over purple dubbing, silver twist.
10. Wings: dun-coloured feather from wing of landrail.—Body: dark, with black or deep brown hackle.
11. Wings: brown mallard feather.—Body: orange mohair, fine red hackle, gold tinsel.
12. Wings: black feather from raven.—Body: dark-coloured floss or mohair, black hackle, orange tip: with or without tinsel.

These, the larger or spring sizes of loch flies, may, I observe, one and all of them, be employed with success in angling for sea-trout or whitlings; indeed, when inclined to rise, there is almost no variety of hook, provided it be of fitting dimensions, which the fish spoken of will positively refuse. That they possess, in common with the *farlo*, humours and caprices, there is little doubt; but these, I have noticed, extend rarely to a matter which many anglers think highly important, viz., the prevailing colour.

of the fly. I have caught them, in their seasons, with lures of every hue,—brown, black, white, crimson, blue, green, purple, grey, dun, yellow, and orange; nay, more, with combinations of two or several such colours, and admixtures, to boot, of all varieties of tinsel. Their tastes, in fact, with respect to this matter, resemble more those of the *salar* or proper salmon than those of the trout, although exercised generally in a state or condition of water somewhat different.

During summer, and in weather comparatively calm, loch trout may be taken more readily with a small than with a large fly. On such occasions, the sizes and kinds of hooks already recommended for stream fishing, will be found sufficiently available.

In connection with fly-fishing for trout on our Highland lochs, I may mention that during windy weather, when the water is much agitated, the angler fishing from the shore will often observe lines or ribbons of foam formed, with some degree of regularity, over the surface, not far from the margin. Under these the trout, when in feeding humour, take up their position, for in such yeasty formations are naturally found maimed and drifted insects in most abundance. The fly-fisher ought, therefore, to direct his hooks, so as to alight on, or cross over these temporary and shifting resorts of the fish, rather than beat the water at random or thrash it over, inch by inch, as it is sometimes expedient to do, especially when he is an utter stranger to the loch and its favourite casts.

To continue the matter necessarily deviated from in these observations, I proceed, having treated of June and July in respect to their qualifications as fly-fishing months, to extend my line of remarks to August and September, or the concluding portion of the trouting season. It has been pretty well ascertained with regard to the river trout of Scotland, that it is in prime or first-rate condition during the middle of summer, and that, subsequent to the latter end of July, it gradually loses curd, bulk, and firmness, the red-fleshed varieties becoming pale, flabby, and ill-flavoured. Some individuals, it is true, retain their edible qualities for a month or two longer, and the small fish of a season's growth, along with parr or fingerlings, continue as sweet as ever, until late in October.

Trout, during the months of August and September, often rise freely, especially after floods and in dark-coloured waters. To the sportsman who is not a mere pot-hunter, they of course afford amusement, and occasionally, notwithstanding their declining condition, test freely the strength of his tackle. I have found the red or brown hackle more killing in these months than any other fly, I mean when the waters were in high order ; for if clear and reduced, trout will prefer the hare-lug and dark-coloured hook. Spring sizes also are commendable in autumn, on some of our rivers, those especially that are frequented by whitlings and bull-trout,—fish which, I find, frequently give the preference to a common trouting fly over the highly-bedizened lures employed against them by many anglers.

To pursue this subject into the months of October and November is quite unnecessary. Angling with the fly loses, on the approach of winter, many of its recommendatory properties. It becomes stripped, as an amusement, of half its interest. One can neither wade nor expose himself to damp feet with any degree of safety. The trout, in general, are poor, lank, and uneatable. They rise badly, and when hooked, afford little or no sport. The streams and gathering spots are strewn over with dead leaves. There are no pure southern breezes, smelling of verdure, to delight the senses—to cheer and invigorate the heart. In fact, as nature with regard to all other recreations hath appointed, so also in regard to angling. It owns, in common with them, its fitting and appropriate season, when the heart's readiness is linked with the hand's energy, the humour of the fish with the inviting and cheerful disposition of wind and water, sun and landscape ; when bank and meadow lie starred and enamelled with flowers ; when the trill of the song-bird issues from every thorn ; when all sounds and all prospects are joyous and exhilarating, and the cloud itself sleeping high in the arch of heaven, is as the bannered presence of some benevolent watcher :—

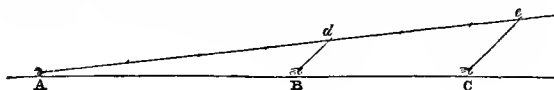
“ One of the spirits unwithdrawn,  
That, erst the fall, were charged to minister  
To the earth's gladness, and continually,  
Out of their ample and unfailing horns,  
To pre-endow the advancing tracks of men.”

## CHAPTER V.

## ON TROUTING WITH THE FLY.

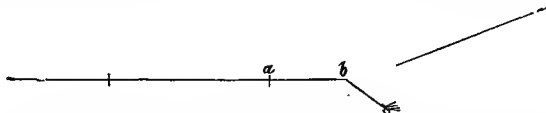
So many full and excellent treatises have been written upon the subject of fly-fishing, that it would really be a work of supererogation on my part, were I to enter very minutely into its discussion. I shall, therefore, as much as possible, avoid running into what may be termed fine-spun detail, while endeavouring to supply the reader with the requisite amount of information on this department of the gentle art. In the preceding chapter, I have sufficiently exposed to view my theory respecting the artificial fly, disclaiming the common notion, that it is quite imperative to construct it after a fixed natural model—to adapt it to hours and seasons, or, except in the matter of size, to extend the variety beyond a very limited and clearly defined range. I have also described, to a certain extent, the making up of the fly-cast, and referred, while treating of tackle, to the gut strands, and their preparation—how knotted, &c. It remains, for me, however, to complete the subject, and this I shall do very briefly.

Trouting-flies, when fished with, are used, according to the caprice of the angler, in pairs, threes, or fours, seldom singly. In small waters, two hooks are sometimes thought sufficient. I seldom, under any circumstances, employ fewer than three. How these are appended and put together, the annexed illustration will render evident.



The trail, stretcher, or lowermost fly, is here indicated by the letter A ; the bobs, or droppers, by the letters B and C. Betwixt A and *d*, where the shorter bob is fastened, extend three or four threads of fine picked gut, forming, in connection with the one upon which the hook has been dressed, a distance varying from three and a half to five feet. The interval between the two droppers—that is, from *d* to *e*—is similarly occupied, but it is not necessary to extend it beyond three feet; and should another bob-fly be added higher up, the same regulation holds in force.

Many anglers have their droppers dressed upon short gut, and append them to the main casting-line by loops, so as to be removed or exchanged at pleasure. This, the ordinary way of making up the fly-cast, answers well enough with those who are more fastidious about the description of flies employed by them than the fineness of their tackle. But, though convenient in this respect, it gives a clumsy appearance to the fly-cast, and is not adapted either to improve its lightness or better its proportions. Loops also, unless they draw or sit well, are apt to catch and disturb the water, so as to alarm the fish. I recommend them, in the construction of all trout-ing tackle, to be employed as sparingly as possible. The bob or dropper, in the making up of the fly-cast, ought, if the length of the gut it is dressed on will admit it, to form, in the first instance, a continuation at the letter *a*, with the main line, and then be made to branch off or depend from it, by the knotting on, at the proper point, *b*, of a new thread.



In the formation of the fly-cast, always commence at the stretcher or trail-hook, allowing the droppers to incline upwards. To connect the casting-line, properly so called, with the uppermost bob, employ three or four threads of good picked gut; and in fine fishing, if thought necessary, increase the number.

In a small publication upon fly-fishing, by Captain

Clarke, R.N., a new method of making up the fly-cast is introduced under the name of the rapid-stream tackle. It consists simply of dressing the upper flies over the joinings of the different lengths of gut, instead of appending them at fixed intervals as droppers, — consequently they will be ranged along the lower casting or foot line, at a distance from each other averaging fifteen inches; and should the above-mentioned portion of the throwing tackle measure ten feet, they will amount in number, inclusive of the trail-hook, to seven or eight. This tackle, the author of the treatise in question recommends as highly serviceable when employed on rapid streams or under a strong wind; and he mentions having accomplished a feat with it in the neighbourhood of Coldstream, which certainly is without precedent in the annals of trout-fishing.

For trouting with the artificial fly, the rod used may either, according to circumstances, be single or double handed. In casting the line, after drawing off the requisite quantity from your reel or winch, lift the flies well up from the surface of the water, and observe that you do so without any jerk or undue violence, at the same time employing some degree of rapidity in the execution of the movement. When the rod has been sufficiently thrown back to accomplish this object, allow it a single moment of suspense, and then, by a natural turn of the wrist and arm, cause the line to describe a circle above your head, after which, the flies having been brought fully round, urge them immediately from you towards the spot where you wish them to alight. This advice is especially applicable in throwing from the left shoulder. It is not always so as respects right shoulder or back casting, which may be managed, when the space behind is quite clear and level, without checking the line, but, on the contrary, allowing it its full swing or play directly in rear of the angler.

Such instructions hold good, equally in regard to throwing with the double and with the single handed rod. There is, however, in other respects, a considerable difference as to the manner of using them, betwixt the two implements, and they both possess different capabilities.



In trouting with the double-handed rod, there is this advantage, that it commands a much greater space of water than the other, and, in consequence, is more adapted for using over lochs and broad rivers. The single-handed rod, on the other hand, excels not so much as a weapon of power as one of craft and pliancy. Its superiority, where fine throwing and quick striking are required, is unquestionable. Armed with it, the practised angler may impel his fly with the most wonderful precision and nicety of calculation : he may command it, in fact, to drop seemingly over the very snout of a feeding fish, and that as lightly as if it were a snow-flake or the natural insect which had fallen instead. When the trout is hooked, also, and there is danger, arising from the smallness of the wire, or any other cause, of its escape, a pliant single-handed rod possesses this great advantage—namely, that by means of it the angler can play his fish with singular delicacy, not requiring, in order to control its movements, to lay stress on his tackle. At once, assisted by this yielding quality in the implement, he can humour every caprice and effort to escape, while, at the same time, he outwaries and subjugates his victim, rendering its capture, in cases even where the hook has taken very slight and unsatisfactory hold, a matter of common occurrence.

It is otherwise, however, in trouting with the double-handed rod. Its general stiffness operates greatly to its prejudice, while playing and landing a badly hooked fish. The angler, also, in handling, has a very limited notion of when to concede and when to employ pressure. He wants in a great measure the nice, regulating powers which a good, flexible, single-handed rod invests him with.

I am referring, be it remembered, in these remarks, solely to trouting, and that with small flies and fine tackle : they cannot be said to apply to any other department of angling, least of all to salmon-fishing or trolling with the minnow. As a general rule bearing reference to this subject, all streams manageable from bank to bank, and such lochs as are frequented by trout under a pound in weight, and do not require the use of a boat, should be fished with the single-handed rod. As to the degree of pliancy requisite

I say nothing, but leave that to be regulated by the discretion of the angler ; indeed, practice will not unfrequently reconcile one to the use of a rod which, at the first handling, he thought much too stiff, or, it might be, much too flexible. The double-handed rod may be used with advantage on broad rivers, and where the sea-trout—a fish which in clear water holds the small trouting fly in esteem—are abundant ; also in lochs where large fish exist, and where long throwing is necessary.

In the preceding chapter, by indicating the resorts of trout during the fly-fishing months, I have sufficiently informed the angler when and where to expect sport. I have also attempted the adaptation of fly-hooks in point of size, to the condition of the water, the progress of the season, &c., &c. It is therefore unnecessary to re-enter upon these subjects, and the more so that, in the course of my Appendix, I have thought proper to apply many of my remarks to individual streams and localities. There is a single matter of experience with respect to fly-fishing in clear streams, and among cunning trout, which I feel induced to speak of. It involves, I may mention, not the least important of the hundred secrets of the art. Every practical fly-fisher must have met with instances where the first cast of the day proved the most successful one : at any rate, it is by no means uncommon, at the very start of a forenoon's sport, to raise and capture a good trout, after which feat, for a long space of time, not a single fin will stir towards the fly. This, on many occasions, is the result of accident ; but it may be accounted for, on others, by the fact that the artificial fly, before the feathers of which it has been made up have imbibed moisture, is more likely to attract a watchful trout towards it than when these have been soaked through, and deprived of their original lightness. It descends, when properly hove, to the surface of the stream or pool like the natural insect, and appears almost to disport itself in the same manner ; whereas, when thoroughly wetted, its descents and motions, although artistically managed, are wanting in that degree of gossamer waywardness, which is more enticing, on some occasions, to cunning trout than are the more regarded requisites of size and colour. Under such circumstances,

therefore—that is, where the fly-fisher has to deal with subtle trout, in clear, glassy streams—it is not an unusual practice, on recovering the line, and before recasting, to describe a figure of eight, twice or thrice successively, in the air with the fly-cast, in order to relieve the plumage of the hooks of the moisture imbibed. Upon this practice, or “dodge,” as some might choose to term it, a good deal of stress is laid by the fishers of certain rivers both in England and Wales. I may mention, however, that, in the adoption of it, only one fly-hook is generally used; a light single-handed rod is necessary, and the line should be of extreme fineness, and neatly tapered off.

Fly-fishing, considered as a branch of the angler's art, possesses peculiar advantages. As an exercise, it is healthy, and just to the proper degree exciting. It braces the muscles, enlivens the spirits, gives rise to an agreeable alternation of hopes and fears; calls into activity the judgment as well as the fancy, the good taste and discrimination of the artist, not less than his ideal and creative powers. It affords room, also, as has often been remarked, for the display of elegant motions and graceful attitudes—impersonations of earnestness and intense enthusiasm, of hope, of anxiety, of joy, of disappointment, of admiration, of pity, of content, of love, of holy feeling, and of crowning felicity.

Is it not, for instance, in the attitude of hope that the angler stands, while in the act of heaving out his flies over some favourite cast? Of hope increased, when he beholds, feeding within reach of his line, the monarch of the stream? But now, mark him, he has dropt the hook cautiously and skilfully just above the indicated spot; the fish, scarcely breaking the surface, has seized it. A fast, firm hold it has, but the tackle is fine, and the trout strong and active. Look! how the expression of his features is undergoing a change. There is still hope, but mingled with it are traces of anxiety—of fear itself. His attitudes, too, are those of a troubled and distempered man. Ha! all is well. The worst is over. The strong push for liberty has been made, and failed. Desperate as that summerset was, it has proved unsuccessful. The tackle—knot and barb—is sufficient. Look now at the

angler. Hope with him is stronger than anxiety, and joy too beams forth under his eyelids ; for, lo ! the fish is showing symptoms of distress. No longer it threatens to exhaust the winch-line ; no longer it combats with the rapids ; no more it strives, with frantic fling or wily plunge, to disengage the hook. It has lost all heart—almost all energy. The fins, paralysed and powerless, are unable for their task. So far from regulating its movements, they cannot even sustain the balance of the fish. Helpless and hopeless it is drawn ashore, upturning, in the act of submission, its starred and gleamy flanks. The countenance of the captor—his movements, (they are those which the soul dictates,) are all joyous and self-congratulatory. But the emotion, strongly depicted though it be, is short-lived. It gives way successively to the feelings of admiration and pity—of admiration, as excited on contemplating the almost incomparable beauty of the captive, its breadth and depth, the harmony of its proportions, as well as the richness and variety of its colours—of pity, as called forth in accordance with our nature,—an unconscious, uncontrollable emotion, which operates with subduing effect on the triumph of the moment.

And now, in their turn, content and thankfulness reign in the heart and develop themselves on the countenance of the angler ; now haply he is impressed with feelings of adoring solemnity stirred up by some scene of unlooked-for grandeur, or the transit of some sublime phenomenon. I say nothing of the feelings of disappointment, anger, envy, and jealousy, which sometimes find their way into the bosom, and are portrayed on the features even of the worthiest and best-tempered of our craft. Too naturally they spring up and blend themselves with our better nature ; yet well it is that they take no hold on the heart, scorching it may be true, but not consuming its day of happiness.

Hence it is, from the very variety of emotions which successively occupy the mind, from their blendings and transitions, that angling derives its pleasures ; hence it holds precedence as a sport with men of thoughtful and ideal temperament ; hence poets, sculptors, and philoso-

phers—the sons and worshippers of genius, have entered, heart and hand, into its pursuit. Therefore it was that Thomson, Burns, Scott, and Hogg, and, in our present day, Wilson and Wordsworth, exchanged eagerly the grey-goose quill and the companionship of books, for the taper wand and the discourse, older than Homer's measures, of streams and cataracts. Therefore it was that Paley left his meditative home, and Davy his tests and crucibles, and Chantrey his moulds, models, and chisel-work,—each and all to rejoice and renovate themselves ; to gather new thoughts and energies, a fresh heart and vigorous hand, in the exercise of that pastime which is teeming with philosophy.

## CHAPTER VI.

## ON FISHING WITH THE WORM FOR TROUT.

To a perfect novice in the art of angling, nothing appears simpler than to capture trout with the worm, provided the water be sufficiently muddled to conceal the person and disguise the tackle of the craftsman. A mere urchin, with a pea-stick for a wand, a string for his line, and a pin for his hook, has often, under such favourable circumstances, effected the landing of a good-sized fish. But to class performances of this description among feats of skill were quite ridiculous, and they are just, to as small an extent, samples of successful worm-fishing. It may perhaps startle some, and these no novices in the art, when I declare, and offer moreover to prove, that worm-fishing for trout requires essentially more address and experience, as well as a better knowledge of the habits and instincts of the fish, than fly-fishing. I do not, be it observed, refer to the practice of this branch of the art as it is followed on hill burns and petty rivulets; neither do I allude to it as pursued after heavy rains in flooded and discoloured waters: my affirmation bears solely upon its practice as carried on during the summer months in the southern districts of Scotland, when the rivers are clear and low, the skies bright and warm. Then it is, and then only, that it ought to be dignified with the name of sport; and sport it assuredly is, fully as exciting, perhaps more so, than angling with the fly or minnow. In the hands of a skilful practitioner, indeed, there is no mode of capturing well-conditioned fish with the rod more remunerative; I say well-conditioned, for in the spawning months,

lean, lank, and unhealthy trout may be massacred in any number by means of salmon-roe, or pastes formed from that substance.

In the present chapter, I shall attempt to make plain the principal points to be attended to by the worm-fisher desirous of success. These I class under the following heads :—

1. The rod and tackle to be employed.
2. The kind of worm, and how prepared.
3. When and where to fish.
4. How to bait and manage the line.

First, then, with regard to the rod and tackle. The former I have already alluded to in a preceding chapter, and shall only repeat, that it ought to be a two-handed one, and in length approaching to seventeen feet—the butt light, formed of well-seasoned Memel fir—the top-pieces somewhat stiff, and fashioned of lance or hickory-wood—a rod, in fact, such as would please the minnow-troller, or give general satisfaction on a Highland stream among sea-trout and small grilises.

And now, with respect to the tackle. This merits very strict attention. Of the reel line I need say nothing. A common trouting one will serve the purpose better than any other. That for casting, however, should be fine, long, and well tapered—the lower portion of it composed of at least seven lengths of single gut, tinged rather than dyed with the ordinary decoction of logwood and alum. These lengths, I need scarcely say, should be knotted together with care and accuracy, but not whipped over at the joinings with silk-thread, an operation to be confined solely to the upper strands of the line. They ought, moreover, to be of picked material, round, clear, and fine, without flaw or fretting.

As to the hook itself, I recommend above all others the common round-bend, sizes 10, 11, and 12, according to the dimensions of the stream, its condition, and kind of trout inhabiting it. Before attaching, nip or file off a part of the shank, which is generally too long, and apt, in striking, to interfere with the mouth of the fish. This I strongly recommend to be done. An application of the file is necessary also, in order to round off a new head and

render the remainder of the shank capable of retaining the wrappings. In attaching worm hooks to the gut or foot-strand, use fine silk thread of a crimson colour, and see that it be well waxed, carefully lapped round and secured, according to the approved mode of fastening I have elsewhere referred to, commonly called the whip-knot. A touch of spirit varnish adds greatly to the compactness and durability of the tying. Some worm-fishers of celebrity adopt a small projection of gut or bristle, as in the tackle used for fishing with the stone-fly, &c.

In preparing worm-tackle, the adjustment of the leads or sinkers is a matter of considerable importance. The accommodation of these to the state or nature of the current requires on the part of the angler both tact and nicety. He must always proceed to work provided with a sufficiency of split shot, BB or No. 1, in his waistcoat pocket—a dozen at the fewest. Through means of these it is that he has to regulate the pace of his worm through the water, as well as to keep it sufficiently near the bottom, close to which, on the outlook, feeding trout lie. As to the pace or rate of travelling in question, it should, I am of opinion, neither be quick nor yet very slow, approaching to that of the current itself, which, from the motion given to the line by the angler, (who, as I shall shortly demonstrate, ought to pitch his hook up against the stream,) it is apt to exceed. One, two, three, or even four leads of the sizes recommended may be required to effect this. These should be placed either together, at a fixed distance from the hook of not less than fifteen inches, or separately, at considerable intervals along the casting line. I prefer greatly, however, the former mode of leading, although several able anglers of my acquaintance adopt the latter, under the idea that it assists or improves the travelling of the worm. Leads formed of shot are frequently drilled through, instead of being slit. The process is more tedious, and renders them, when required to be shifted or displaced, less handy, although there is no question but that they give greater satisfaction to the eye, and if intended to be permanent are perhaps preferable. I may here repeat, that, in the making up of tackle for worm-fishing, loops are strongly to be condemned, and at



no time should they be permitted to head the strand or gut on which the hook is dressed. The very nearest ought to be kept at double arm's-length from the bait.

I am now brought to treat of the kind of worm best adapted for trout-fishing, and the preparing of it for use. It is not my province, however, while on this subject, to discuss the natural history of the worm under the five classes into which it has been divided by Linnæus. I shall confine my observations solely to the different kinds of earth-worms (*intestina*), frequenting our soils and employed by the angler. Of these there are at the fewest six or seven species, with their varieties.

1st. THE LARGE SAND-LOB, or LUGG-WORM, employed by the fishermen on our coasts in the capture of flounders, haddocks, and other salt-water fish. It is easily discovered, at ebb of tide, on almost all sand-stretches, by the small hill or coil of refuse bearing its own resemblance, and backed, at the distance of ten or twelve inches, by a corresponding hole or sink, of diameter sufficient in some instances to admit the entrance of one's little finger. Betwixt these indications, at a foot's depth from the surface, the worm lies, and is readily dislodged by means of a common sand-fork. I have heard it asserted that sea-trout at the entrance of rivers will take this bait greedily, and that salmon also have been known to seize it. It is not, however, a worm to be held in much esteem by the angler, being thick, flabby, ill-coloured, and not readily purged or toughened.

2d. THE EARTH-LOB, or DEW-WORM; sometimes, but improperly, divided into two separate species. This is found in almost all cultivated soils, where the earth, naturally light, has been enriched by the application of manures. It frequents especially gardens and grounds wrought with the spade, concealing itself in the daytime at a considerable depth, and when the weather is mild rising about sunset to the surface, where, after a shower, it may be discovered at listless length stretched in proximity with others of its kind, and lapping, as it were, the new-fallen moisture. On such occasions, large quantities of this innocuous reptile may be captured with little address, requiring only the use of a ready eye and hand. As a trout-bait, it is not greatly valued by the angler, on

account of its size and the difficulty experienced in toughening it. It forms, however, when properly strung, a favourite morsel with eels, chubs, and other ravenous fish; and on night lines may be used to some purpose as an enticement even to trout themselves, and these the largest and most wary. The virtues of the lob-worm as a bait for salmon are well known to all frequenters of Tweedside.

3d. The third species of earth-worm I bring under the angler's notice is the **BLACK-HEAD, or BUTTON-WORM**. This latter is no doubt a local term, confined chiefly to the south of Scotland, but descriptive, in some measure, of the habits and appearance of the animal, whose nature it is, during the summer months, to coil and knot itself up in the form of a ball or old-fashioned button. Under this shape it is found nearly dormant, in light gravelly soils, frequently among rich dry garden mould, but most abundantly among the roots and massed fibres of old meadow grass. Of all the earth-worms, it is the kind best suited for the angler, possessing the very qualifications he most desires, in a trouting worm. Its general length and thickness—the one seldom exceeding six or seven inches, the other that of a small goose-quill—its colour and natural toughness, and the capability of being improved which these qualities possess, all combine to render it an object of considerable value to the sportsman. One variety of it there is, termed the maiden-worm, which possesses the peculiar advantage of being free from what is called the knot—a development well known to naturalists, as embracing the generative organs of the reptile, and not much relished by anglers on account of its unseemliness, and the broken, distorted appearance it gives to the bait. The button-worm is dark-headed, but of a lively red lower down; although frequently, during summer, found in the coiled state, it more generally comes under our notice, as most worms do, possessing its share of life and activity, and may be brought to the surface by any agitating process, such as the rapid stirring of a spade or dibble inserted into the mould it inhabits. This, by the instinct of the animal, is evidently mistaken for the subterranean movements of the mole, its principal enemy. This is a much better method of obtaining worms, in some localities, than digging, inasmuch as it brings them within hand-reach in

a more purged condition, and inflicts, in the case of garden ground, little or no injury to plants or vegetables in the vicinity. A solution of lime or salt in water, moderately strong, and dashed from a pail over the surface, I have seen used with effect on old grass land, when the blade is parched and short, otherwise the worms raised are apt to escape the eye. Those taken in this manner ought to be washed immediately in fresh water, a precaution rendered necessary by the prejudicial nature of the agents above-named.

4th. **THE MARSH-WORM.**—This species of reptile is found commonly in damp, mossy ground, often under stones, in cow-dung, and among quicken heaps which are partially decayed. It resembles, in some respects, a small dew or lob worm, but is much more delicate in the texture. Trout, I know, especially in hill burns, are fond of it; but it is many degrees too soft for angling with in sizeable streams, where one requires to pitch the bait to a distance; nor is it readily rendered tough by keeping, like most worms. Still, if handled tenderly and dropt with caution, it is not a despicable lure when employed either in narrow rivulets or among feeding trout, in still, deep, closely-shaded water.

5th. **THE BRANDLING**—A worm held in great esteem by anglers of the old school. It is, however, no favourite of mine, possessing, as it does, all the faults of the marsh-worm, and none of the virtues. Equally soft and frangible, it wants entirely the fresh sweetness of the other, and is filled instead with a yellowish matter, which, oozing on the slightest touch from various parts of the body, is, as regards odour and appearance, particularly offensive. The brandling is found only in certain localities, by the sides of ditches, and in rank ground artificially kept moist. Transferred, however, to old rich dung or leaf compost, it will thrive admirably, and in warm weather breed with astonishing rapidity. The brandling, to look at, before handling, is, on the whole, a beautiful worm, being ringed over with alternate circles of crimson and white. Its shape, however, is somewhat flat, and contributes, along with the defects already mentioned, to lower it considerably in my opinion as an angling bait.

6th. **THE RED-HEAD.**—The finest variety of this worm

is found associated with the one above mentioned, or in soils of the same nature and degree of richness. It inhabits also some farmyards, and an inferior sort is found plentifully enough in many fields and gardens. When cleansed, it is of one hue throughout, namely, a lively pink or red colour, not possessing the dark head of the button-worm, next to which species, as an angling bait, it deserves without question to be ranked. The principal faults I find with it are, the clearness or pellucid nature of its skin, and the more than ordinary power it has of elongating and contracting its body, thereby, in the one case, occasioning a disclosure of the hook underneath, and in the other, an aptness in the worm to work itself partially off the wire, and thus render inevitable the protrusion of the point or barb. A smaller description of hook, say No. 9, would, I think, suit better the size of the red-head than that used for the button-worm.

7th. **THE GILT-TAIL.**—A small, sluggish worm, having a green or yellowish appearance in the lower extremity. This is found in places rank with the decay of vegetable matter, where turnips have been fed off, among rubbish heaps, &c. It is capable of being purged so as to part with much of its natural colour, and assume a tendency to redness. The gilt-tail also is easily toughened, and during a scarcity of better, the angler will find it a tolerable bait for trout.

Having thus attempted to specify the different kinds of earth-worms bred in our soils, and to describe their qualities as angling baits, I proceed to say, in few words, how they ought to be prepared or made ready for use. In the preparation of worms three ends are desirable, and these are to be attained only by an equal number of processes, conducted either severally or conjunctly. The requisites in question embody, first, the purging or cleansing ; next, the toughening ; and, lastly, the reddening of the worm.

On being dug or captured, all worms not intended for immediate use, with the exception of those found in the button state, should be placed, for the space of three or four minutes, in a vessel containing water ; some recommend the addition of a little salt, in order to divest them as thoroughly as possible of any earthy matter attached to their outward coating. The further effect of this immer-

sion is, to cleanse partially the entrails of the reptile, occasioning it to throw off what imparts to the skin a dingy and ill-favoured appearance. Thus washed, the worms should be allowed to crawl about for a short time on a clean, dry board, with the view of ridding them of all superfluous moisture. When this is sufficiently accomplished, transfer them into a large earthenware jar, filled, or nearly so, with hart's-horn moss.

The hart's-horn is a species of moss, well known to the northern angler. It is found chiefly on moorland, and in boggy places surrounded by heath. Externally, on the exposed parts, it possesses a reddish tinge; the stalks and lower foliage are of a pale colour, approaching to yellow. Like many other mosses, it is found in considerable clumps; the texture possesses great softness, and, when handled, is agreeable to the palm. Although, in highly cultivated districts, difficult to procure, the extreme lightness and abundant nature of the plant, in places favourable to its growth, render it easy of acquisition. When dry it keeps for years, and the worm-fisher ought, unquestionably, always to possess a stock of it. He will find the common fog generally used in England much its inferior, although at a pinch not to be rejected. Before using the hart's-horn moss, let it be well washed: the hard and whitish stalks ought to be twitched off, and the red soft portions retained.

The worms, on their transference to the moss-jar, still undergo the process of scouring, but along with it is conjoined that of toughening, and, should it be thought necessary, the further one of reddenning. This last, I confess, for my own part, I have always deemed fanciful; but as it is my purpose in this present treatise as much to propound the practice of others as to put forward my own notions, I shall not omit describing it. The drier the moss is among which the worms are placed, the quicker they become fit for use; at the same time, be it remembered, their natural juices are the sooner exhausted, and if kept beyond a certain period without moisture, they soon lose all liveliness, pine away, and die. The dryness of the fog ought, therefore, to be regulated by circumstances, by the state of the weather, the temperature of the apartment or cellar where the jar is placed, and the time when its contents are

required to be used. As to the reddening matter spoken of, which some anglers mix up with the fog when in a moist condition, it is a species of high-coloured earth, reduced to a fine powder, and resembling brick-dust. This may be purchased at any druggist's, under the name of Bole Armenian. It is supposed the worms consume a portion of it as their food, being deprived of other natural sustenance, in the shape of earth, and that they actually fatten upon it, imbibing, at the same time, its alluring colour. Nor is it always administered to them mixed up slenderly with fog, but sometimes employed in larger quantities, moistened with water, and mingled with a little sweet cream. So much for the preparation of earth-worms as angling baits. The essential matter is to have them red and lively, possessing, at the same time, some measure of toughness, so as not to break upon the hook, and thereby expose to view a portion of its shank or barb. While undergoing the processes above mentioned, it is requisite to keep them in a cool shady place; for, although naturally retentive of life when maimed or broken, they are not proof against great atmospheric changes, being easily sickened by heat, and killed by extreme moisture. I would advise anglers, who happen to be located in favourable situations, and have the command of a garden, field, or court-yard, to keep up a breeding stock of worms of the best sorts. To effect this, nothing further is necessary than to lay in a quantity of leaf-mould, or the rakings of such parts of a road or highway as, during the early portion of winter, are enriched by the droppings from trees and hedges. This may be mixed up advantageously with cow-dung, in the proportion of one part of the latter to three of the former, and the whole laid out in small heaps, not above two feet in height. In these heaps, if left undisturbed, the best sorts of fishing-worms will breed rapidly. The mixture recommended can be used afterwards as manure, its fertilising properties being of the highest order. In breeding the brandling-worm, use a larger proportion of animal manure, as the temperature of the mixture requires to be considerably heightened. An application of salt or quick-lime, made with the view of improving the fertilising properties of the compost, will infallibly, be it noted, injure, if not eradicate, the whole stock.

Having treated of the several sorts of earth-worms used in angling, and the mode of preparing them, I am brought now, as was proposed in pursuing the subject of worm-fishing, to make some observations upon the season of the year suitable for this kind of sport, the time of day, and description of weather ; and, lastly, the places or portions of water best adapted for its practice. On Tweedside, worm-fishing seldom commences until the latter end of May, or beginning of June, when the main stream and its tributaries are in ordinary seasons considerably reduced. The trout, in a certain measure, require to be sated with fly-food before having recourse to any coarser aliment ; at any rate, some change seems to be effected in their tastes and habits, virtually inexplicable, but yet dependent upon the instinct implanted by nature—an instinct which, as regards many animals, has in all ages baffled, perplexed, and silenced the minutest inquiry. Before trout take the worm freely, it is necessary also that the temperature of the water should be at a state of considerable elevation, at least fifty degrees of Fahrenheit, and, moreover, that it be acted upon at the time by a fair proportion of sunlight ; indeed, a bright hot day is not at all objectionable, the air being calm, or but slightly agitated. Such a condition, both of water and weather, often occurs during the month of June, and its occurrence is, indeed, frequently protracted throughout July. These, in fact—June and July—added to the latter half of May, constitute, as regards the southern districts of Scotland, our best worm-fishing months. Be it noted, however, by way of repetition, that I am not at present alluding to the simple and coarse practice of the art pursued among starved and unwary fish in mountain rivulets, nor do I refer to worm-fishing in flooded and discoloured streams ; but I treat of it solely as respects clear waters, inhabited by cunning, cautious trout, and, in consequence, as a method of angling which requires of the craftsman great skill, and no stinted amount of prudence. With regard to hill-burn fishing, undoubtedly it is more in season during August and September, when rains are frequent, than in June and July ; and in discoloured waters, trout may be captured with worm throughout the whole year, no one month excepted.

Connected with the branch of the art properly under

notice, and the time of the year suitable for its practice, I may here mention the fact that, in the months above named, trout are invariably in their best condition, strong, active, plump, and firm—a recommendation that weighs much with the honest angler, who is always epicure enough to know and admire the good points of a fish, and who dislikes, very pardonably, to burden his pannier with such as are ill-shaped, villanously complexioned, soft, rank, and useless, affording on the hook no play, to the eye no pleasure, and at the table no nourishment.

As to the time of day when trout take the worm most largely, that depends not a little upon the state of the atmosphere. In warm, tranquil weather, they are sometimes met with in feeding humour shortly after sunrise, and continue to be so until one or two o'clock, P. M. Generally, however, they do not commence to bite freely before eight or nine, A. M., and leave off in the course of five or six hours. During this period, short intervals of relaxation frequently occur, when the fish refuse to feed, and as often there are climaxes when they seize the worm with more than usual alacrity. These, however, happen chiefly on variable and unequal days, when warm glimpses mingle with dull and cloudy weather.

I proceed now to a description of those portions of water where success is generally met with by the worm-fisher ; and, be it noted, that such are not the usual haunts of trout when in quest of insect and surface food. They are, on the contrary, the very places which an experienced fly-fisher would look over and avoid. Instead of the central current or foaming eddy, they consist of shallows, off-streams, and nooks of water ; thin, fordable, gravelly stretches, and that smooth but not tardy flow, which in large rivers frequently heads a more troubled descent or rapid.

I say not that the main stream is altogether to be neglected, for, under long-continued droughts, it is frequently, from the nature of the channel or *alveus*, the only portion of water where fish can be taken ; but, in the general experience of all able worm-fishers, the largest and finest trout are found feeding among the shoals and detached runlets, in places frequently, which, at first glance,



one is led to imagine are not of sufficient depth to cover and conceal them. Here they lie in watch for their expected prey, under the shelter sometimes of a large stone or jut of rock, and in its absence, breasting immovable the gliding current.

In swollen waters, I need scarcely inform the angler that trout, during summer, take the worm eagerly at what is termed the tail of a stream, in places that are neither calm nor turbulent, small eddies, &c. Among hill burns, no one can mistake where to drop his bait; indeed, in many of them, every inch of water ought to be fished, and so it should be as respects the appropriate feeding spots in large rivers. No likely haunt or ripple ought the angler to pass over, no indication of shelter for trout should he regard with indifference: his eye, hand, and line, must always be kept active; his heart and its hopes always up and alive.

A few instructions as to baiting the hook and managing the line shall, as proposed, conclude this chapter. I presume the angler to be provided with a quantity of prepared worms. If he intends devoting to the sport the best part of an entire day, let his supply of these be ample. On no such occasion ought he to venture on a river where trout abound, without five or six scores. Nothing is so provoking as to run short of bait at a time when fish are in the taking humour; and yet how frequently does this happen even with experienced fishers? The worms, I further presume, are confined in a flannel bag ten or twelve inches in depth, and of width sufficient to admit readily the hand of the sportsman. Along with them has been placed a quantity of hart's-horn fog, moistened or otherwise, according to their condition. The bag, for convenience, should be appended to a button or button-hole at the side of the angler. In addition to the bag, some use a tin box affixed to a belt or leather strap, which is buckled on round the waist. To this the best and liveliest worms are transferred, free of moss, so that they can be taken out at once, and without injury.

In baiting, let the operator hold the hook either in his right or left hand, betwixt the thumb and forefinger; and having extracted with the other, from its place of confine-

ment, a worm of suitable dimensions, let him, beginning not far from the head of the reptile, thrust into it the point of the wire. He must then continue to run it along, over bend and shank, until the entire hook and nearly half an inch of the gut surmounting it be completely covered, taking great care not to break or further injure the body of the bait, and nowhere to expose the instrument of capture underneath. This latter advice is particularly to be attended to as respects the barb or point, the smallest protrusion of which is sufficient to alarm and warn off fish, and these always the primest and best-conditioned.

I have not hitherto said a great deal as to the size of the worm. It is difficult to procure any large number exactly of equal length and thickness, nor is any such correspondence as to their proportions at all necessary. The button-worm, which, as it is generally found, measures about six or seven inches, and is as thick nearly in the upper part as a small quill, may be taken as the standard in point of size. Smaller worms are often as deadly, perhaps in some waters more so; but on Tweed and Teviot, I for my own part prefer a large bait. It is less apt to be assailed by parr and insignificant trout, and without question, attracts more readily the eye of big watchful fish—of the roving swallow-smolt, and sometimes of the salmon itself.

Reverting to the matter in question—namely, the baiting of the tackle—it often happens, the worms being unequal, that the angler finds it difficult to accommodate some of them to the dimensions of the hook. Should the bait be a little over-sized and lively, and he deem it not worth his while substituting a larger description of hook for the one in use, I would recommend him, after running on the worm about half its length, to force through it the barb, and, omitting a small portion of the body, re-enter the point of the wire and continue the running on, bringing, as he does so, the wounded parts into contact immediately over the bend of the instrument, and thereby furthering its entire concealment. Nearly one-third of the worm should, on all occasions, be left to move about as it wills, beyond the point of the hook. This serves as a

lure to attract fish, and does not, as some imagine, interfere with the seizure of the tackle; for no trout, however cautious and wary, ever engrosses its prey otherwise than head-foremost. Accordingly, on taking the worm, it always assails the thicker extremity, and at no time wastes its attack on the tail or lower end of the bait. Considering this, and the liability which, in consequence, the upper portion runs of returning to hand broken and disabled, should the striking prove unsuccessful, some anglers, instead of inserting the hook below, actually do so through the mouth or orifice of the head itself. Another reason brought forward in support of this mode of baiting is, that, in the ordinary plan, the mere casting of the line serves, not unfrequently, to break or injure what they term the neck of the worm—namely, that part of it where the hook is first inserted. This, I allow, is an objection of some weight, but it acts as a meagre set-off to the bad effect of their practice, which is no less than to curtail at an early stage the life and action of the worm, thereby destroying its efficacy as a lure or provocative, and rendering it, in fact, a mere piece of dead matter.

While on this subject, let me caution the angler to pay close attention to the condition of his worm; indeed, every two or three unsuccessful casts he ought strictly to examine it, in case it has either become partially disengaged from the hook, or is in any degree maimed and ruptured, not to say water-logged and motionless. A maimed bait few trout worth capturing will snatch at. It has attractions only for parr and small fry; and as for a dead worm, they would as soon think of attacking a mutton chop—which, by the way, I understand, is the favourite bait of the river cod in some of the Australian rivers.

I shall now, as undertaken by me, wind up this chapter on worm-fishing, with a few instructions as to the management of the line. Although recommending to the worm-fisher the use of a light double-handed rod, I do not insist upon it as absolutely essential. It gives him, however, a power or facility over his line, especially if a long one, which no single-handed implement can ever possess. Both in waters that require to be waded, and the smallest

description of rivulets, it is of equal advantage. Employed on the one, the angler, without any strain, jerk, or extra impulse, which very frequently chafes and injures the worm, is enabled to heave out his bait to the required spot; he possesses, moreover, full command in recovering his tackle for a new throw, and, as the occasion happens, can strike his fish with readiness and considerable certainty. Employed on the other, he can drop his worm unsuspected, softly as a snow-flake, behind stone or shelter fence, under banks and below boughs, keeping himself and his shadow concealed and at a distance. Such advantages, as far as concerns worm-fishing, the one-handed rod can have no pretensions to. The leads and weight of the worm are great drawbacks to its power. These it can neither sufficiently heave out nor recover. In the striking of fish, also, it is of little avail, except when stiffish and used with a short line.

I introduce, it may be thought by some, the above observations respecting the kind of rod best adapted for worm-fishing a little out of place; but when it is considered that the proper management of the tackle depends not a little upon the implement employed, they will be allowed to be quite preliminary to the subject under treatment. Let me presume that the angler is armed, as I have recommended, with a light double-handed rod, and that he has gained the scene of action, trimmed his tackle, and affixed his bait; his eye also is in command of a likely piece of water, which, as generally happens during summer, in large streams like Tweed or Teviot, can only be fished with much success by the wader. In he steps courageously, but with due caution, below the place specified, lengthening line as he does so in the usual manner—that is, with the assistance of his hand, and by a slight jerking movement of the top-piece of his rod along the surface. When he has unwound as much as he can conveniently heave out and recover without injury to the worm, let him venture his cast. This he may do, either over the left or right arm, as best suits his position, and the side of the river he angles from. He ought not, however, as in fly-fishing, to perform the full sweep round his shoulders, but to substitute for it that

mode of throwing the bait which consists of heaving or pitching it forward—a plan which very little practice will make him proficient in, and one that both saves the worm and causes it, on its fall, to break, without undue disturbance, the surface of the water.

As I have already had occasion to remark, all able worm-fishers invariably cast the line up the stream, taking their stance below where the trout are presumed to lie, and never allowing the bait, as it is carried down by the current, to pass beneath them. This practice of theirs embodies two separate advices, both of which respectively demand attention. In heaving the bait up against the course of the stream, more than one advantage accrues to the angler. He is, first of all, kept better concealed from the wary eye of the trout, which, as is well known, always, when resting, fronts the current; and although possessed of visual organs sufficiently prominent to detect objects above or on either side of it, can descry but very partially what takes place in its rear. Again, from his position, he can strike with greater effect. In this particular he acquires a very decided advantage over the old-fangled mode of worm-fishing—that, namely, of casting down the stream; adopting which system the angler, when striking, is more apt to pull his hook fairly out of the mouth of the fish without even pricking it, than, as when he throws against the current and strikes downward, to bring it, bend and barb, into direct contact with the open jaws of the biter. A third advantage obtained by the mode of casting I am recommending is, that the water is less disturbed; the unavoidable plunging of the wader affecting only those portions of it that lie below him, and which he has either thought proper to omit as useless, or has already ransacked.

The other advice conveyed by the practice of able worm-fishers is, never to allow the bait, which is carried down with the current, to pass below you. Lift it always before it comes into line with the opposite bank of the river. In permitting it to descend further, you not only angle without much hope of success, throwing away time and labour, but you frighten off more good trout than you are actually aware of. A fish, for instance, has just

caught a glimpse of your bait, as it travels home towards you ; he follows it, but by the time he can give any indication of his approach, it is carried down, either among your feet or to a short distance on one side of where you stand. Still he pursues it, but is all at once made aware of your presence, becomes alarmed, and bids you for that forenoon, at least, farewell ; whereas, had you lifted your worm in sufficient time, you would have left him above you on the outlook, and readier than ever to seize it when again pitched in beyond him.

I shall append a single instruction as to the striking of fish. Upon this matter the question naturally suggests itself—when ought a trout to be struck ? Whether directly on its first attack or after repeated assaults, at a crisis when it is presumed to have pounced or swallowed the worm ? As in everything else, so in this matter, there exists a medium, and to hit that happy and just degree is all that is desirable. Now, for my own part, I am opposed, out and out, to the dilatory system of giving the fish its own time ; neither am I an advocate for immediate striking. In the one case you afford opportunity for the trout to detect the nature of your lure, which, in three cases out of four, it assuredly will do ; then, moreover, should you secure it after all, you are put to the disagreeable and time-wasting task of extricating the hook from its stomach, instead of simply disengaging it from the lip, jaw, or tongue. In the other case you act in ignorance of the habits of the fish, whose primary attack is upon the life of the worm—an attempt merely to deaden its movements, and render it capable of being engrossed more at leisure and without detriment. Accordingly, as is well known, trout always assail the head or most vital part ; and it is not until this has been rendered inert, which it generally is after one or two vigorous bites, that it attempts to engross the entire bait within its jaws. This is the moment for striking, and it is distinguished more satisfactorily by the running away of your line from the spot where the attack commenced, towards the retreat of the fish. In performing the movement, do so steadily and with firmness, not by means of a jerk, which is apt either to snap the gut or tear away the barb of the hook

from the part entered. Hold the rod well up, and always incline your pull downwards, or as little as possible at variance with the flow of the river. When a fish is hooked, land it without delay : if a small one, it is not in many cases worth the wader's while dragging it to shore ; if large, or even moderate sized, the safe rule is to do so, unless you happen to be provided with the inconvenient convenience of a landing-net. Always keep the line tight. Should you, from distrust of your tackle, be afraid of over stressing it, the blame lies originally with yourself, and you deserve to become the sufferer.

## CHAPTER VII.

## TROUT-FISHING WITH THE MINNOW AND PARR-TAIL.

EVERY branch of the angler's art requires its separate measure of address, observation, and practice. All the departments are not equally fine, and, of course, do not make the same demands upon the skill and experience of the craftsman. Trouting with the worm and salmon-roe, for instance, in discoloured water, is a coarser and at the same time simpler and less ingenious manner of fishing than trouting by means of the artificial fly ; and if we descend to bring into the comparison such branches of the art as are pursued with float and set-line, and those which have for their object the capture of the less cautious sorts of fish, such as pike, perch, eels, &c., the distinction becomes still more evident.

Allowing, then, the above assertion to be correct, what place, in the consequent arrangement, ought I to assign to that division of the art now under treatment ? Shall I class it among the subtle, more refined, and difficult departments ?—or shall I allot it room with those which, comparatively speaking, are coarse and inelegant, requiring little exercise of judgment, small experience, and no great stretch of attention ? Now, although not willing to allow it the very highest position, as a branch of our craft, I make no hesitation in saying, that, as far as regards the display of skill and science, it stands on a level little inferior to any other. Placing foremost the able fly-fisher, I would rank, hand in hand, in my group of anglers, such as are adepts in the art with worm and minnow ; nor must the position thus assigned to the last mentioned be ignorantly



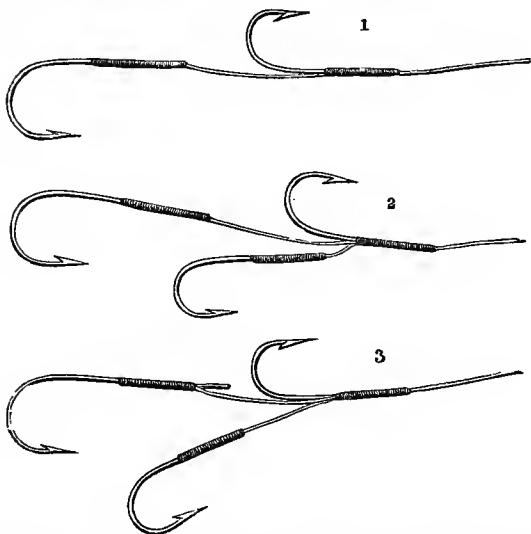
held a questionable one; for if injustice, by this arrangement, has been done at all, the worm-fisher is, in truth, the party injured—a matter in evidence of which I refer to the preceding chapter. Independently, however, of its position in point of skill as a branch of angling, fishing with the minnow has its interests and excitements. It is truly a sport of winning and enlivening character. None is there, for my own part, that I love better to practise—none that acts with livelier influence on the hopes and fancies of the angler.

In handling this subject, I shall adopt a similar course of division to that already pursued in my chapter on worm-fishing. First of all, it is my design to treat of the rod and tackle best adapted for the minnow-troller. On burns and waters of no great width, such as the Yarrow, Ettrick, and upper portions of Tweed, he will find sufficient for his purpose, a single-handed rod thirteen feet and a half in length, provided with stiffish tops, and indeed, throughout, less limber than the generality of fishing-wands. On a stream, however, that cannot be commanded without deep wading, on lochs frequented by large fish, and in all places where pike are likely to interfere with the bait, I would recommend a double-handed instrument, lighter in material, and in its dimensions a trifle shorter than that employed by salmon-fishers. With this, the reel and its provision ought in all respects to correspond.

Regarding the correct fitting-up of the minnow-tackle, and the proper size, number, and arrangement of hooks to be employed in it, great difference of opinion exists. Some contend in favour of many, some of few hooks; some prefer large ones, some small, while others advise the use of both conjoined. I shall not, however, perplex the reader with arguments for and against one and all of the sorts of minnow-tackles in vogue. My duty is to submit to him the most approved models; and this I do, in the confidence that, if an angler at all, he will be able to recognise their merits, and allow them the superiority they claim over a whole armoury of crude and fanciful contrivances, palmed off on the public, under the title in question.

The simplest and most killing form of minnow-tackle I

am acquainted with, is that delineated in figure No. 1, and consists of two hooks, Nos. 12 & 10, tied on, as represented.



This is the tackle in its medium size, but it may either be enlarged or lessened, according to the proportions of the minnow employed: that is to say, should the minnow exceed the usual and favourite length of two inches and a half, a tackle of corresponding dimensions becomes requisite; and the same, when the bait is undersized.

Of the advantages of this description of tackle, I require to say little. They are apparent to all who are in the custom of using it, and arise, in no small degree, from its great simplicity. This mainly it is that renders the process of baiting or attaching the minnow at once speedy and neat. It can, in fact, be performed in a few seconds, and is generally free from such imperfections as either offend the eye or affect the spinning. With respect, indeed, to its qualification of spinning well, there is, in the size and arrangement of the hooks, those very requisites that enable it to do so.

In attaching the minnow, enter the large or lowermost hook at its mouth, and run the fish, in the same manner you would a worm, along over the bend and shank, taking care not to rupture its skin or belly. When about a quarter of an inch from the tail, bring through the barb, allowing it to protrude freely, until, in fact, the turn of the hook is almost exposed—the minnow, which presents necessarily a curved form, covering the remainder. This done, and presuming that the length of the tackle is justly proportioned to that of the bait, the smaller hook is in a position to admit of being readily thrust through its lips, both under and upper—an operation which, by effectually closing them, greatly assists the spinning. Should the portion of gut intervening betwixt the hooks prove slightly too long, the angler has it always in his power to shorten it, by simply giving it a turn over the upper wire, before closing up the mouth of the minnow. His great care should be properly to adjust the bait and regulate its curve. Without attention to this matter, the spinning, at its best, will only prove lame and unattractive.

Should he, for instance, exceed the mark and double up the body of the minnow, until forming nearly a circle, not only will it turn ill, but present, to boot, an unnatural and deformed appearance, acting as a scare-away rather than a lure or inducement. On the other hand, also, when the minnow is made to retain its natural straightness, it loses on the tackle almost all approximation to a living, and consequently wholesome fish, being rendered incompetent either to spin at all, or so wretchedly as to expose the art of the angler, and render abortive all his attempts to induce trout to seize it. And here, upon these points, I may assert that the tackle now recommended by me proves its superiority; for there is nothing more accommodating to the desired curve in the minnow than the bend of the larger or lower hook. It conforms, indeed, with the greatest exactness, to that very portion of the bait where the curve or turn is required. This hook also, from its comparative weight and other evident causes, operates most beneficially, as a help or occasion to the minnow to spin freely. It is not, however, generally so killing as the upper wire, which, entering the lips of the bait, is more liable to come

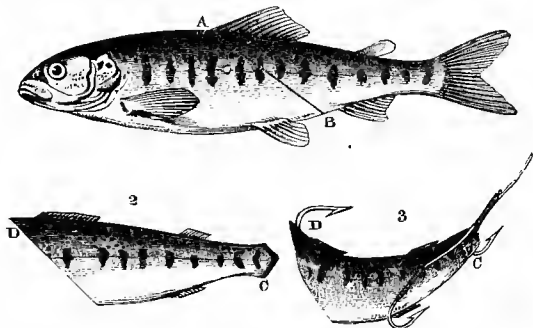
into contact with the jaws of the trout, seeing that, as I have already mentioned, all fish, if possible, seize their prey by the head or most vital part.

The tackle No. 2 is, in all respects, similar to the one above spoken of, only that it is provided, in addition, with a side hook, of the same dimensions as the upper one. It is baited also exactly in a similar manner; the supernumerary hook not being entered into any part of the minnow, but allowed to hang loose, by its own joining, alongside of the bait. I have classed this among the above illustrations, as a variety of the minnow-tackle, simply because it is employed as such by some able anglers. Its conformation, however, renders it better adapted for parr-tail fishing, and it is, properly speaking, the parr-tail tackle of Tweedside. Another modification of it will be found exhibited in No. 3, the difference betwixt the two lying merely in the mode of appending the lower hook, which, in the one arrangement, is performed as usual; while in the other, a considerable portion of the shank-end is left exposed, for the purpose, in baiting, of its being inserted below the skin of the tail.

And here, seeing I have classed minnow and parr-tail fishing under one head or chapter, although in truth, as branches of the art, they vary in several particulars, it will be proper to introduce some instructions as to the modelling or preparation of the bait in question, and the affixing of it to its appropriate tackle. The parrs or smolts fittest for use are those above four and under six inches in length. If of a smaller size, they may, as occasion offers, be employed entire, like the minnow, on suitable tackle; larger, I cannot well recommend them, unless as a trolling bait on lochs inhabited by pike and the *salmo ferox*. The cutting of the parr-tail for stream fishing is an operation which requires some nicety and attention. It is one, also, very imperfectly understood away from Tweedside: indeed, even there, I have encountered anglers, (whose experience in the other branches of the art was beyond challenge,) bungling it most effectually. The main error of all such lies in the notion, that because it is natural for fish to swim head-foremost, or with their tails in the rear, they only act with discretion when they allot the same position

to their bait—that is, when appending it to the tackle with the tail lowermost ; whereas in the proper, economical, and killing method of fishing, it is attached quite the reverse way. Accordingly, in shaping and cutting out the bait, let the following instructions be strictly attended to.

Divide the parr or smolt with a sharp pen-knife, in the direction of A B. Cut off all the fins, closely and carefully, not excepting the caudal or tail ones. These, indeed, should be neatly rounded off,



and caution used not to break the contiguous skin. This process of shaping the parr-tail may be performed, in the course of a few seconds, either at the water-side, or by the wader on the lid of his creel. No. 2 of the above illustrations exhibits the figure of the parr-tail, as ready for use. In No. 3, it is represented as affixed to the tackle, C forming the head or foremost portion, and D the other extremity of the bait. Now, the advantages of this mode of attaching it are very evident. To satisfy himself with respect to them, let the angler, by way of experiment, adopt what is seemingly the more natural method of baiting ; let him retain the finny portions of the tail, and place the end denoted by the letter D, foremost. The first cast taken by him may, not improbably, as regards the spinning of his lure, prove pretty satisfactory ; and should the stream run strong, those immediately succeeding it may still meet his expectations. In a short time, however, he begins to find all going wrong—the bait refusing, in spite of two or

more box-swivels, to spin at all, or spinning only by fits and starts, awkwardly and inefficiently; its appearance, moreover, totally altered, the skin loosened, the fleshy parts flabby and worn away by the action of the water, which they come into violent contact with, and, in fact, the possibility of a trout seizing it utterly at an end. Let him, however, by way of change, adopt the mode of baiting above recommended. The advantages derived from it will quickly discover themselves. Not only, indeed, will the parr-tail spin with more freedom and regularity, its heavier portion being lowermost, but it will last, to boot, for a much greater length of time, and frequently subserve to capture two or three fish. All this is owing to the narrow and protected part being attached foremost; consequently the opposing current is confined in its action upon the bait to the lower and expanding extremity—a circumstance greatly favouring the spinning, while, at the same time, in conjunction with the natural toughness of the advanced end, it prevents that other portion of the parr-tail from becoming worn and fretted.

I have been thus particular in my description of this and the first-mentioned tackles, because experience has taught me to consider them as unsurpassed, in their separate adaptations, by any other combination of hooks. It is very true, however, as I have already hinted, that many able and accomplished anglers give the preference to more compound and perplexing devices, some using five, some seven, and others as many as eleven hooks, variously sized and arranged. Of these tackles, however, I shall say little. Without holding them in absolute disregard, I cannot help thinking they are constructed upon an unsound principle, as far, at least, as relates to the spinning of the minnow or parr-tail—(a point the most essential, connected with this sort of fishing;) and although seemingly, from their armed and horrescent appearance, better adapted to take good hold of a trout than the simple forms of tackle above recommended, yet in reality they are not a whit more so.

While on the subject of minnow and parr-tail tackle, I find it requisite, having specified to the best of my ability the most approved and useful sorts, to say a few words as to

the disposition of the leads and swivels. I presume that the hooks, whatever their number or arrangement, are invariably tied on fine round gut. Of this article, four or five lengths, forming a continued stretch of as many feet, are in general sufficient to use singly or in connection with the casting-line, which, on all occasions, should be formed of the same material, triple-spun or made up. Immediately above the lowermost length, or that to which the hooks are attached, I would fix the leads or split shot, sizes B B, or No. 1, varying them in number according to circumstances. In minnow-trolling, for my own part, I prefer the line heavily weighted: others, I know, do not; nay, I am acquainted with one gentleman, an excellent and successful angler, who uses, during the summer months, no leads at all, but fishes with the minnow as with the fly, almost on the surface of the stream—a manner of plying the lure which only great practice can render remunerative. The advantages, however, of leading heavily consist of improved spinning, greater likelihood of attracting the eye of the fish, and a much better chance of hooking them. In this latter respect, the superiority over light or surface fishing is unquestionable. The trout or salmon, when pursuing the minnow, is generally out of sight, and you are first made aware of his presence at seizure—that is, a moment or two previous to the time when you ought to strike; whereas, in the other mode spoken of, you perceive the fish on his approach to the bait, and are liable, three times out of four, either to strike too soon, or put him on his guard by altering the course of the spinning, checking the line, or jerking away the minnow. It is very true, notwithstanding, that with tackle barely weighted, you can always, on throwing, command a greater stretch of water; yet the advantage of doing so in minnow or parr-tail fishing is exceedingly doubtful, and if desired for the purpose of escaping detection from the trout, perfectly unnecessary: for when rivers are in trim for these sorts of angling—that is, either large and discoloured, or perfectly clear and small—in both cases, the fish, in their appropriate haunts, are eager and fearless, not readily deterred from their purpose, even within arm's-length of the angler himself.

And as to heavy leading, it is, in salmon-fishing, with the minnow or parr-tail, quite indispensable ; for the fish in question, when inclined to take the spinning lure, do not, like trout, change ground on the rove or feed, but lie close to the bottom, in their favourite places of resort, and are only roused to seize it by the bait, in a particular temperature and state of water, passing near or before them.

For trouting, the ordinary number of leads of the sizes mentioned, which a minnow or parr-tail tackle requires, ranges from two to four. In heavy water, more, if necessary, can readily be added ; but I would avoid deep leading, over a weedy or rocky bottom. Some anglers, instead of attaching the shot a short way above the tackle and all at one spot, distribute it, at different intervals, along the gut-lengths and casting-line itself—a practice I do not think commendable.

The box-swivel is a very necessary part of the minnow tackle. Its material use is not so much to assist the spinning of the lure, which it does to an ample extent, as to prevent perplexity to the line, a mishap always consequent upon its omission. In trouting with the minnow, two, sometimes three swivels, are employed by anglers. The lowermost of these should be fixed at the head of the gut-strand third from the hooks, or at a distance of nearly three feet from the bait. Another ought to have its position immediately below the higher casting-line, and in connection with the uppermost length of single gut. A third, if reckoned of use, may find place a yard beyond it, about the centre of the line alluded to. I have met with those who differ from me very materially as to the above disposition of the swivels, and who, among other suggestions, recommend that the lowermost one should be attached immediately over the hooks at the head of the minnow itself ; and insist that, under this arrangement, the spinning of the tackle will be greatly improved. Possibly, to some little extent it may ; but I have generally experienced that the spinning depends far more on the fineness and roundness of the gut on which the hooks are dressed, as well as the fixing on of the minnow and leads, than upon the swivels themselves, which, as I have already said, help chiefly to prevent perplexity to the line. The



size of the swivel ought, of course, to be regulated by its position and the description of tackle it is employed to assist. Very small ones, I find, are apt to become rusted and stiff in the axis. They are not so secure or perfect as those of the medium size, which, in addition to their other advantages, subserve as leads or weights, in default of a sufficiency of these requisites.

Having exhausted all that at present is necessary to be said with regard to the tackle used in angling with the minnow and parr-tail, I proceed, before giving instructions as to the manner of employing these baits, to acquaint the reader with the kind and size of minnow reckoned enticing, its substitutes, and the simplest methods of procuring this favourite lure. Early in the season—that is to say, during the months of March and April—trout, in swollen or partly discoloured waters, provided these are not greatly impregnated with dissolved snow, are in nowise averse to dart even at the largest and least captivating description of minnow; but at the period alluded to, it is both against the habits of true sportsmen to angle for them, seeing that they cannot be expected to have acquired as yet anything like condition, and also, there is but a thin sprinkling that have left their winter resorts, and begun to frequent the shoals and streams, best adapted for the spinning lure. In May, June, and July, the principal trouting months, they become, in most rivers, more dainty and capricious. Large and ill-favoured minnows are viewed by them with suspicion, and it is needful for the angler to oppose craft to craft, and fastidiousness, in his choice of a proper bait, to their fastidiousness in the selection of food. Accordingly, it behoves him to pick out the best and fittest of the penk or minnow tribe; those, namely, which, being of a small or medium size, are well-shaped and silvery. All the spawning and unhealthy ones, unless in an hour of pressure, ought to be rejected; also all stickle-backs, and, I may add, loaches—although, when no better are to be had, they prove a tolerable enough substitute for the lure in question. During the month of July, when the river runs low and clear, minnows and small fry of a very minute size, accommodated to tackle of corresponding fineness, will be found much more killing than those of ordinary dimensions. I have taken many good trout, and on one

occasion recently, an excellent salmon with a spinning lure not more than an inch in length, attached to a tackle made up with a couple of undressed fly-hooks—Nos. 6 and 7, Adlington.

And as to the capturing of minnows for bait, this may be accomplished in a variety of ways. It may be done during a rising or fully-flooded water, by means of a small pout or hag net, used among petty eddies, submersed tufts of grass, and various nooks and shelter-places which the current may happen to form with the banks. In these it is that this tiny fish finds natural refuge from the violence of the swollen stream; and the net in question, when worked low and with the current, I have generally found pretty effectual as a means of obtaining it in considerable quantities. Indeed, during the spring months, when the minnow is in demand for salmon-fishing, the pout-net forms on Tweedside the readiest contrivance for procuring a supply.

The hoop-net also, when the waters are clear and small, may be employed with great advantage against the minnow tribe. It is used most successfully in by-waters, where the fish in question are observed in large shoals, and consists simply of a ring or hoop, at least three or four feet in diameter, and formed of thick wire, to which a net has been suspended. This is attached by cords converging from the circumference, to a staff or pole two or three yards in length, by the assistance of which the net is laid cautiously down, in the shallow resort or piece of by-water alluded to. The fish, by means of small fragments of worms or other bait, are then invited to feed over it, and when drawn in sufficient numbers towards the centre of the hag, the whole is suddenly lifted by the person employed to capture them. Minnows may also be procured, in places where they abound, by the following very simple and rapid process. The performer has only to watch the fragments of rock under which they take shelter, more especially those which project toward or beyond the surface of the by-pool, and procuring a large stone, dash it violently against them. The fish, stunned by the blow, will rise helpless to the surface, and may be seized without any difficulty. On the same principle, many streams and rivulets are poached during summer by persons armed

merely with a sledge-hammer. The vigorous application of this implement to the stones under which trout are presumed to lodge, has the effect above mentioned.

A third method of capturing minnows for bait is with the hook and line. Upon this expedient there is no need of enlarging. Those who have recourse to it should, however, always remember to employ tackle properly proportioned to the size of the fish. Let them use one or two hooks, as they think desirable, of sizes 2 or 3, round-bend. A small fragment of worm will suffice for the bait, the upper half of a trouting rod or a branch cut from some neighbouring willow, for the wand; and I would recommend, moreover, the use of a small float, which not only prevents the hook from coming into contact with the bottom, but notifies to the angler the exact time when to strike.

Minnows, immediately on being captured, should be transferred to a jug or pitcher half-filled with water. This, should the angler happen to be detained for any length of time at the river side, ought to be every now and then emptied of its contents, and again replenished, otherwise the fish, if numerous, are apt to sicken and die. A few changes of water, however, invariably reconcile them to their new situation. When not for immediate use, let him, on reaching home, commit them to some cool and roomy recipient, such as a stone-trough, or large tub or pail. He will require to supply them with fresh water, at least once a week in the spring season, and oftener during summer. I find it is not necessary to use exclusively what is drawn from a stream or lake, but well and even rain water answer the purpose quite as satisfactorily, provided they are administered, at the first, in limited proportions. To such as have the command of a pond or small rivulet, the keeping of minnows during the greater part of the season presents no difficulty. They have only to enclose them in a deal box, perforated throughout with gimlet-holes. This, by means of a few heavy stones or weights placed inside, is conveyed to the bottom of the piece of water in question, or by-pool formed from it, and there kept sunk until its finny contents are in demand. When minnows are to be used, I know of no better mode of conveying them to the place of action, than by means of a

common soda-water bottle. This, when about two-thirds filled with water, will contain conveniently upwards of a score of these fish; and if at intervals—on affixing, for instance, a fresh bait—the element natural to them be changed by the angler, they may be kept alive during the whole day. The cork accommodated to this vessel ought to be provided with an air-hole, either driven through its centre, or nicked out at the side. Minnows, when carried in a dead state, if fresh, should be deposited among moss or grass slightly moistened; if salted, they may be placed for convenience in a tin box similar to what is used in worm-fishing, and suspended in the same manner, by a belt round the waist of the angler. I may mention, by the way, that I have no great opinion of the salted minnow. It is a troublesome bait to deal with, readily torn and disfigured in fastening, dull in the eye and colour, and an uncertain spinner.

I have thus, at some length, discussed two or three of the most important matters connected with this branch of the art, and shall now offer some instructions as to the time when, the places where, and the manner how, it ought to be pursued. And first, as to the time and season adapted for minnow and parr-tail fishing. I have already stated that large hungry trout may be taken as early as March or even February; but in these months, the generality of them have not yet begun to frequent the beats and shallows, although, during mild weather, invited into them by the appearance of surface food. Floods also, then as at other times, compel trout to be active and abandon their places of refuge; and it is on the first subsiding of these that the minnow-troller generally meets with success.

I may mention here, however, that although, in my younger years, eager to capture individuals of the finny tribe whenever I could, be it in the middle of Christmas or on one of the dog-days, I am now content to limit my trouting expeditions, in a great measure, to the season in which these fish are fit for use; indeed, to slaughter them indiscriminately, during all the months of the year, as may be done by the use of the salmon-roë and pastes made from it, I consider wrong, and inconsiderate. Holding such views, and recommending the same to every honest and

high-minded angler, I exclude, in accordance with them, from my trouting calendar, that portion of the year preceding the 15th April, and also the months following August, during which interval the *farlo* or common trout, with a few exceptions, is out of condition, and unfit to be used as human food. Angling with the minnow, then, being thus limited, along with the other branches of trout-fishing, in point of season, it is only proper for the craftsman to take every advantage which weather and the state of the rivers afford, to pursue his amusement. This may be done, either, as I have already remarked, when the water after a heavy flood has begun to subside, and is verging upon a dark porter colour, or when it is clear and small, under a bright sun. Also, during warm summer nights, the minnow, as well as the fly and lob-worm, is a sure and deadly bait, enticing to large trout which have their haunts throughout the day in deep, still water. On such occasions, too, the parr-tail will be found effective; but of this bait the true season is what on Tweedside is known as the smolt period, viz., those weeks of the year in which the parr, having assumed its silver coating, makes descent, in numerous shoals, towards the salt-water. Then it is that all the large trout of our salmon rivers are out and on the watch, marking with cunning eye the bands as they pass them, if so be they can detect a wounded, worn-out, or incautious straggler; for on such it is, not on the healthy and alert pilgrims, they generally expend their vigour. The usual period for such emigrations is the latter week of April and first fortnight of May; but frequently they commence sooner, and terminate, as in an occurrence of drougths, much later. May and June, however, I esteem to be the best months for parr-tail fishing, although what is termed the swallow-smolt—a coarse rapacious species of the *salmonidæ*—is more on the move during the first-mentioned month.

The parr-tail, I may remark, is often used as a companion to the worm, and proves most killing in a similar state of water, and the same sort of day, described in a previous chapter as suitable for the worm-fisher. Indeed, one pursuing that branch of the sport, in rivers frequented by large trout, ought always to have parr-tail tackle along with him, and employ it also, on procuring the requisite

bait, in places adapted to its use. These, he will find, seldom interfere with his worm-ground, being rapid and broken water, often the central current, sometimes, indeed, seething eddies and detached strips of the river, whitened over with foam: nor are racing shallows, less than the breaks and necks of streams, to be despised, glassy and exposed though they be, for there large trout love, on suspended fin, to sun themselves, and hold on the outlook for prey. Such localities, too, as I have described, are, in the size and state of river referred to, well adapted for the spinning of the minnow. After a flood, however, in discoloured water, this bait must be fished with among casts of a different character. The trout, then, except in the smaller description of rivers, descend to less turbulent places of resort. They move off more into the silent shallows, sometimes to the very foot of streams, into diversions from the main current, not unfrequently into what, in the usual state of the river, is smooth and seemingly motionless water. They are found, indeed, should the flood happen to be a large one, scattered about in all places of comparative shelter, close below banks, among side-runs and small whirls—in fact, everywhere, except in central and violently-agitated currents.

I am now brought (having specified when and where this branch of the art ought to be pursued, to add some instructions as to the manner of pursuing it with success. The movements of the minnow on its appropriate tackle, and under swivel traces—spinning, as it is made to do, with great rapidity, and often in the teeth of a strong current—are allowedly unnatural, nearly as much so as are the vagaries forced on the artificial salmon-fly. How, then, the inquiry arises, are trout, the wariest of all the finny tribes, deceived by them? This is a question of which it is vain to attempt giving the satisfactory solution. It is evident, however, that if trout regard the bait in question as a minnow at all, they do so under the notion that it is a sickened or injured one—an individual separated from its resort, and unable, through weakness or loss of instinctive consciousness, either to regain it or to take refuge elsewhere. As a proof of this, I may mention that not unfrequently, when drawing the lure referred to through a host of live minnows, I have been surprised by

the appearance of a good trout darting suddenly at my bait from some shelter stone, in the very centre of the spot—preferring it seemingly, because (notwithstanding its mangled and fettered condition) an easier prey, to any individual of the shoal among which it dwelt. On the same principle it is—namely, the comparative facility with which they are captured—that vermin (carrion-crows and beasts of prey) search out and assail wounded and stray animals, while they watch, with apparent indifference, the movements of such as are healthy and banded together. I do not, of course, mean to assert that trout will forbear attacking the minnow in its active state, in the same manner as, when hard pressed, the creatures mentioned attack their game or quarry; on the contrary, they are well known to do so, and often, as the contents of their maws testify, very successfully. But every angler, I think, must coincide with me in opinion, that a spinning bait takes their fancy in a wonderful degree; to account for which, I am perfectly justified in making the assumption with respect to it above set forth.

The angler, then, must bear in mind, that it is folly and over-refinement to attempt approximating the movements of his bait to those of a healthy minnow. Such an effect, by any known process, he cannot produce. His sole object should, therefore, be to hide and disguise the tackle, and it is solely by rapid spinning he can accomplish this. The quick and equal spinning of the lure is, in fact, the one thing most essential to be studied and understood in fishing with the minnow. This attained, what remains to be known and done is, in many respects, comparatively easy; for instance, the throwing of the line. All that the angler requires to pay attention to, over and above the instructions I have given upon that matter, in my chapter on fly-fishing, is, that he does not injure or tear the bait—a misfortune to be avoided chiefly by care, and by not attempting to cast the minnow farther than is requisite. Except in angling for salmon, indeed, I never experienced the necessity of throwing a long line, when using this lure; and often, instead of casting it like the fly, I adopt the expedient of heaving or pitching it forward—sometimes, under certain circumstances, of merely dropping it from the end of the rod.

As to the proper mode of playing or working the minnow, I require to say little. It should be submitted, in fact, to every test and variety of movement; these, however, being made dependent upon the nature of the current it is cast into. Sometimes, like the salmon-fly, it ought to be urged along by short, measured jerks; sometimes drawn steadily against the stream, in one continued pull; sometimes made to descend for a little way, and then re-operated on by the angler. Now, on being cast across, it should be brought back in a curve to his feet, and again allowed merely to dip near some stone or ledge of rock; in short, provided the spinning movement is kept up, and all collateral instructions already given attended to, there is no possible mode of playing this bait which may not prove successful in attracting trout. I have, a short way back, professed myself in favour of deep fishing, and enumerated one or two of the advantages derived from it. These, I may again state, are connected chiefly with the spinning of the minnow and hooking of the fish; and it is in this latter respect, as an assistance to the striker, that I now once more recommend the adoption of heavy leads. The angler using them is not put to the necessity of constantly watching his lure, but detects the presence of an assailant by the hand oftener than the eye. This, of course, he cannot do until the fish has fairly made seizure of the minnow, whereas in surface spinning the case is different. Accordingly, each method requires from the craftsman its peculiar manner of treatment as regards the striking.

When the fish, as generally happens in deep spinning, is felt instead of being seen, the angler has only to slacken the line for a second or two, and then, with a slight jerk of the rod upwards, recall it. He will find, in three cases out of four, (unless the trout, being over-fed, through a long continuance of flooded water, bite shyly,) his fish hooked. Again, in the other case, should he descry the assailant on its approach towards the minnow, he ought by no means either to suspend, quicken, or alter the spinning, until its intentions are further completed by the seizure of the bait. And here, as in salmon fishing, lies the difficulty, at least to a beginner in the art, who is apt, immediately on perceiving the trout, either to strike, and



in doing so jerk from it the lure, or else to check too rapidly its motion, and thus undeceive and alarm his prey. Against both these errors it behoves the angler to be on his guard, and, at the same time, to use such preventives (of which, in fishing with the minnow, I know of none better than heavy leading) as will act against their occurrence.

It very frequently happens that a fish, which has followed this bait for some distance below the surface unawares to the angler, will make no attempt to seize it, until brought close to bank or the margin of the stream. Accordingly, great caution ought to be exercised by the craftsman in the lifting of the minnow. He should always exhaust or complete his cast. On no account ought he to break it off abruptly or in midway. The sudden and uncalled-for abstraction of the bait, before edging, loses him many a good trout. This, at the time, is not always made evident, but it is not the less an undoubted fact. In the case of bolder fish, like the pike, it is better manifested. These, when trolled for with a spinning lure, withhold their attack, four times out of five, until it is within a foot of the margin; nay, I have been a witness to instances of their actually running aground in pursuit of the bait. Trout, also, I have seen so earnest in the chase, as with difficulty to regain their way back from the shallows into deep water; but this is of rarer occurrence with them than with the fish above mentioned. On the contrary, they often exhibit no sign of their presence, and are passed over unawares by the careless and hasty angler, whose bait they had actually pursued, and would in all probability have taken hold of, had he not abruptly withdrawn it from their vision.

While on fishing with the minnow, I may take notice (having exhausted most of the points connected with it, as a spinning lure for trout) of two or three other methods of using this bait, practised occasionally by the angler. One of these is live-minnow fishing. This branch of the art is little cultivated, and very imperfectly understood in Scotland. For my own part, I do not pretend to any acquaintance with it, and, in consequence, refer the reader desirous of gaining information on the matter to Blaine's "Dictionary of Rural Sports," a very useful work in the main, but,

on the subject of fishing, rather too comprehensive and exhausting. It embraces, in fact, upon that science, a medley of theories, adopting, as its own guide or creed, no individual one. It somewhat involves and perplexes the reader with the multiplicity of its divisions, the variety of its information, and complex nature of its arrangement. On the whole, however, it is a book eminently instructive, and one which ought to be in the hands of every lover of sport.

From this digression I pass on to describe the diving minnow-tackle, the way of baiting, &c. The tackle mentioned consists of a single hook, No. 10 or 11—Adlington, having a long, leaded shank, looped at the head. This, by the assistance of a needle, or small wire having a groove at one end, is passed through its jaws along the body of the minnow, the barb of the hook being left, as in baiting with the single gorge-tackle for pike, to protrude from one side of the mouth. Thus trimmed out, the lure is intended to descend rapidly towards the bottom of deep, still portions of water, resorted to by large trout, and accessible from the bank to the angler. What may be termed the bend of a pool, especially if shaded over with wood, is likely ground for this kind of sport. It is, in fact, only a variety of dipping, and may be pursued in places somewhat similar. A considerable depth of water is, however, essential. The diving minnow requires to be fished under swivel traces; for, although not intended to spin, but only to dart downwards, yet, on recovery, it is very apt to do so, and, in consequence, to perplex the line of the angler. A fish, when seizing this bait, generally does so on its descent, and at the moment it reaches the bottom. It is detected, of course, by the hand, and requires to be struck without much parleying. This mode of fishing is generally most successful early in spring, before trout have quitted the pools and still places. It is on no occasion, however, even then, very remunerative.

Akin to it is a mode of fishing with the dead minnow, in streams and during the summer season. Here a simple worm-hook, No. 10, is employed, not leaded on the shank like the former, but attached in the usual manner to a thread of fine gut. To bait this tackle, one may either employ, as before detailed, the grooved wire or needle, or,

in absence of it, let him insert his hook not far from the lower extremity of the minnow, and, passing it along as through a worm, bring it out at the mouth. He should then, in order to sustain the bait in its proper position, hitch the gut over the tail—some recommend two hitches—and draw all firm. Thus baited, I fish almost in the same manner as when using the worm, and in a condition of water somewhat similar, the streams being low and clear, the skies bright and warm.

Of artificial minnows and imitations of small fish I require to say little. They are not, as far as I am acquainted, held in much esteem by tried and able anglers. In the whole course of my experience and inquiry, I never heard of a single wonderful feat having been achieved by any of them, although the qualities and virtues of not a few have been expatiated upon, in my presence, over and over again. One imitation of the minnow, reckoned very deadly, has, as the seat of its attractive qualities, a coating formed from the belly-skin of the salmon; others are made of mother-of-pearl, horn, whalebone, gutta serena, &c.; and an additional sort of lure, introduced to Tweedside some years ago, under sanguine hopes of its proving successful, consists of a piece of crystal, shaped like a small fish, and set in metal. This last-mentioned artifice, when brought to the test, possesses, I understand, a certain degree of merit, that, namely, of attracting the notice of the fish, and bringing them towards the tackle. Invariably, however, they refuse to seize it, turning tail when within arm's-length of doing so, and only, instead of rewarding, provoking the patience of the angler. The Archimedean-screw minnow, a still later invention, is worthy of being classed in the same catalogue. Imitations of small fish, I can readily believe, may prove tolerably successful during a stiffish breeze, when trolled with in some Highland loch; but on rivers, at least on those of the south of Scotland, and I am convinced our northern ones also, they assuredly do not answer. They want a very important essential, and that is, smell or flavour, the sense of which in trout is, as fishing with the salmon roe demonstrates, most exquisite.

In this article on minnow trouting I have omitted, in its proper place, to allude to the English system of capping the head of the bait, a plan which, when adopted in con-

nection with certain combinations of hooks, materially, I allow, assists the spinning, but one the advantages of which are completely done away with by the use of such tackle as I have recommended. There are also two evils resulting from the adoption of it, apparently unregarded : one is, that it interferes with the protrusion of a hook from the very part of the minnow, namely, the head, whereby trout generally seize it ; and the other, that it disguises in some measure the conformation of that section of the lure, more especially the eyes, which I esteem to be of a very attractive nature.

TROLLING FOR THE *SALMO FEROX*.—In connection with this chapter, I am led to introduce a few instructions upon the art of trolling for the *salmo ferox*, or great lake trout. Our most-frequented trolling-grounds are, Lochs Awe, Rannoch, and Shin ; and, accordingly, the means of accommodation, in the shape of boats and rowers, as well as the conveniences afforded by good inns, are most readily obtained in their vicinity. The boats generally used are strongly built, and made to draw a considerable depth of water. The cobbles or shallows, so suitable to Tweed, are of much too light a construction to do service on our Highland lochs, and in a breezy day would prove quite unmanageable. It will be found expedient to employ two men, or at least a man and a boy, in order to work the boat properly, and assist the troller when required. A knowing hand or two ought, if possible, to be secured for this occupation—one that is acquainted with the haunts of the fish, and more especially with the soundings of the lake, its bays, creeks, and the position of its feeders. The sport of the day frequently depends upon the acquirements of your attendant ; but these, be it borne in mind, are not to be trusted to on all occasions, and will be found very frequently at fault, or mixed up with unreasonable prejudices. I would advise the troller, therefore, if not altogether a novice in the art, now and then to make use of his own judgment, even although he be an entire stranger to the place.

The general equipment of a trolling-party consists of two rods, each eighteen feet in length, provided with stout stiff tops, full-sized rings, and a winch or reel of large dimensions, containing not less than eighty or ninety yards of the best hand-wrought line.

In making up trolling-tackle, the dimensions of the trout or parr to be used as bait must be taken into consideration, and made to regulate the size and setting, if not the number, of hooks employed. In some localities it is difficult, at all seasons, to command an adequate supply of small trout, and the troller is often obliged to use baits of a larger description. At times, also, it is desirable to vary the size of the lure, and, in doing so, to substitute a tackle of corresponding dimensions. Indeed, when two rods are used, baits of different sizes ought to be tried together at the outset, and that size which proves successful adopted during the rest of the day. Accordingly, the troller ought to be provided with tackles of various sizes, and, I may add, also, of various descriptions; for, although not an advocate for large and perplexing assortments, I cannot too strongly impress upon the angler the necessity of being fully equipped and prepared at all points.

There are two sorts of tackle which I recommend to the notice of the troller. The first is simply the parr-tail form already described, consisting of three hooks, the wires of which should be of extra thickness. In making up an ordinary-sized trolling-tackle of this description, a round-bend, No. 20 Adlington, or one of Philips' No 6, should be tied on lowermost. Round-bends Nos. 14 or 15, or Irish hocks of corresponding sizes, will answer the purposes of lip-hook and hanger. The best triple-spun gut traces, guarded with brass or copper wire to the extent of three inches above the lip-hook, ought to be employed. Gut, now-a-days, is more esteemed by accomplished trollers, on account of its strength, durability, and other properties, than silk gimp, which at one time was generally preferred.

When large baits are used, this form of tackle will be improved by adding another tier of hooks, two in number, tied back to back; one intended to project from the mouth of the spinning lure, and the other to serve the purpose of lip-hook. In this case the fixed hook of the middle tier should be inserted into the body of the bait.

The second form of trolling-tackle recommended is that used by Major Cheape, one of the most successful trollers for the *salmo ferox* in Scotland. It is still simpler in its construction than the parr-tail tackle, consisting, like it, of only three hooks—a main one, which, in my original

specimen, is of Redditch manufacture, 5-0 Bartleet, corresponding to No. 6 Philips—and two upper ones, 3-0 Bartleet, corresponding to No. 8 Philips. The upper hooks are tied on together immediately over the lower one, at an angle of about thirty-five degrees—the shank end of the latter coming almost into contact with the point of junction forming the angle. To the size of tackle described, no bait can be adapted better than a parr or smolt of ordinary length; indeed—although trout exceeding a quarter of a pound in weight are often held in preference by trollers, and reckoned more attractive to large fish—I have every reason to believe that greater execution will be done, in the long run, with baits of small dimensions, well shaped, and silvery in the exterior.

In weighting the trolling-tackle, attach the leads to the traces at the distance of two feet from the bait. A large box-swivel should be fixed immediately above them, and another at least two yards higher up, at the junction of the triple-gut casting-line with the winch-line. Split buck-shot, from four to eight in number, according to the depth of lake trolled in, are frequently used as plummets; but it is advisable to substitute for these small tubes of lead, shaped so as not to interfere with the spinning of the lure, which large round pellets of metal, by resisting the pressure of the water in advance, are apt to do. These ought to be made of various weights, not, however, exceeding two ounces.

When baited and ready for action, the angler takes up his position at the stern of the boat, which I shall suppose to be now fairly launched into deep water, and moving forward under oars at the rate of one and a half miles per hour. One of his rods is laid down carefully at his side, or held by an attendant, while the bait of the other is dropt overboard, and line let out by the hand to a distance of not less than twenty-five, or greater than forty yards. This accomplished, the butt-end of the rod is fixed at the bottom of the boat, in such a manner that the upper portion will project over it, at an angle with the stern of thirty degrees. To effect this properly, it will be found convenient to have the rim of the boat, where crossed, perforated to receive an oar-pin, the contact of which with the rod will both help to maintain it in its correct posi-

tion, and relieve the angler of much useless trouble and anxiety.

In setting the rod, see that the line is free, and ready to leave the reel the instant an offer occurs. It is the practice of some trollers to draw out a portion, and confine it under a small stone at the bottom of the boat, or on one of the benches. When a fish makes its seizure, the stone is jerked off, and summary notice given to the expectant sportsman.

One rod having been set in the way described, the troller should lose no time in putting the other to use in a similar manner on the opposite side of the boat. The tackle plying nearest the shore, being more apt to come into contact with the bottom, ought to be less weighted than the other, or kept under tow with a more stinted supply of line. In event of such a casualty taking place, and it does so frequently, before attempting to disengage the fixed hooks, and while ordering the boat to be backed, the troller, with all possible expedition, should secure the safety of his remaining tackle. I know of nothing in trolling more awkwardly annoying than a double fix ; but it is one of those scrapes which the angler has to thank himself for ; and should he escape from it without a smashed rod, as well as damaged gear, he may be considered tolerably fortunate. When a fish is hooked, similar advice ought to be acted upon, and the other rod committed without delay to the charge of one of the rowers, whose duty it is, as speedily as possible, to wind up line, and afford clear space for the play of the *ferox*. Always, when it is convenient, on getting hold of a large trout, make for the shore, and there select a landing-place. It is a much safer practice than to attempt taking him in with the hoop-net from the boat itself in deep water, as, should he not be completely exhausted, you run the hazard of his darting under the keel, perhaps causing your line to run foul of the planks, and in this way making his escape. A *salmo ferox* will sometimes follow the bait a long way, making a succession of offers, all of which may be distinctly marked by the strain upon the rod, as well as the extraction of line from the winch, yet continue to avoid coming into contact with the hooks. A fish, in this wary and undecided mood, cannot be calculated upon, but there

can be no harm in recrossing the ground he occupies with a fresh bait of smaller dimensions.

A practical lesson or two, in the company of an experienced boatman, cannot fail in making one an adept in the art of trolling, and so rendering any instructions which might be added by me quite superfluous.

The *salmo ferox* may be taken by the troller at all seasons. It is known, indeed, to be very capricious as regards its feeding-hours, but that these correspond to some extent with those of the *fario* admits of no question. It must not, however, be held as a rule without its exceptions, that when the common loch-trouts are active in search of food, the *ferox* is abroad on the outlook. Frequently, when surface provision is very abundant, and the fly-fisher meets with great success, the troller, although he has carefully proved the best beats, fails in getting an offer. At other times, when the fly-fisher can show but a sorry pannier, he succeeds in producing his brace and a half or two brace of magnificent *feroces*. A bright cloudless day, when the loch is calm or but slightly ruffled, will often prove more fortunate than one that is dull and breezy; and cold cheerless weather, an easterly wind prevailing, will, on occasions, bring sport, when a succession of fine genial days has failed to do so. The afternoon and evening are generally looked forward to as the best portions of the day. Fly-fishing with a single-handed rod may agreeably be combined with trolling. It can be practised from the stern of the boat, without interfering to any serious extent with the sport of the day, and may often help to keep up a proper degree of excitement during the long interval which, even on a successful occasion, is likely to occur betwixt the starting of the boat and the capture of the lake leviathan.



## CHAPTER VIII.

## FISHING WITH THE SALMON-ROE.

ALTHOUGH fishing with the salmon-roë is considered, and perhaps with reason, by many anglers, as allied to poaching, and in consequence is frequently tiraded against, without pause or forbearance, I do not think I should be doing justice to what is designed to be a full exposition of the art and science of angling, were I to exclude all notice of it from these pages. The wonderful property, possessed by the bait in question, of attracting trout, is of itself a subject demanding the attention and investigation of the naturalist. To what sense or instinct inherent in the fish it is attributable, remains still, in some measure, a matter of dispute; whether, in fact, it is dependent upon the exquisiteness of their taste, or that subtle power of discernment which not unfrequently is connected with the organ of smell. For my own part, I am inclined to believe it depends upon the exercise of both senses, although chiefly upon the latter. That the use of the salmon roë in its prepared state, as employed by anglers, possesses the virtue I speak of to a truly singular extent, a very few instances falling under personal experience may suffice to prove; and from these, I undertake to make a few deductions in favour of occasionally, and in certain localities, employing it as a bait for trout. Its wholesale use, however, without respect to river and season, I utterly condemn, in common with all lovers of fair sport; and although, on the occasions to be made mention of, some may deem that I advance far towards transgressing upon the principle I profess to hold, they will find, if I mistake not, in my argument, a good and sufficient apology.

The first instance I shall bring forward with respect to the attractive power of this bait, I find jotted down in my angling note-book as occurring on the 24th of November 1837. The piece of water fished on was the lower extremity of a short side-stream on the Teviot, about a mile from Kelso, a spot which, in the summer season, was wont to be clear and shallow, and, in consequence, not plentifully stocked with trout. Immediately below lies a succession of rapid streams, extending onwards above two hundred yards, and then terminating in a large pool or dam.

Having taken up my stand at the margin of the small snatch of water above described, I commenced operations about two hours before noon, concluding them a short while after three o'clock, during which moderate interval I captured no fewer than eleven dozen of trout, many of them about a pound in weight, and along with these a clear bull-trout weighing about five pounds. Nor, on leaving off, had I nearly exhausted the apparent contents of the spot; I say apparent, for it was evident to me, both from their scarcity at the commencement, and the gradual increase of the trout in number as I continued to fish on, that they approached the bait, as it were, by a trail, from various quarters farther down; some from the rapid streams immediately below, but the greater part undoubtedly from the pool in which these terminated, and which, at that advanced season of the year, formed, unless induced to leave it by some exciting bait like the one then employed by me, their natural haunt.

Another instance, of later date, which I shall mention, occurred at Teviot-foot, not very far distant from the scene of action already spoken of, on the 16th of October 1844. The water, on this occasion, was only slightly swollen, and far from that state which is generally held in estimation by roe-anglers; nor, indeed, was the paste used by me of the best quality, being fabricated, not from the roe of the salmon, but that of the bull-trout, and in consequence very inferior, both as respected colour and flavour. I commenced angling precisely at eight o'clock A.M., and left off, my bait being wholly exhausted, at ten minutes before one, the whole period of time occupied by me extending to nearly five hours. The number of trout cap-

tured was in all two hundred and twelve, several of them weighing a pound and a half. I hooked and played also two bull-trout, or large whitlings, but, owing to the under-size of my hooks, or some other cause, they made their escape. As on the former occasion, the fish, when I was compelled for want of bait to abandon the sport, were still in feeding humour, more eager, indeed, and ravenous than during any other portion of the forenoon. The spot I occupied, on the above-mentioned day, lies at a distance of three hundred yards from the junction of the Teviot with Tweed; and as the varieties of the common or parr trout inhabiting the two rivers are quite distinct, the one from the other, in external appearance, I was at no loss to specify and assort them. I came accordingly to the conclusion that, at the fewest, two-thirds of the fish captured by me belonged to Tweed; and that these, owing to the attractive qualities of the salmon-roe, had traced their way up to the bait, some of them, I have no doubt, out of Maxwheel pool, situated at the distance of half a mile from the spot in question. .

It were easy, did I choose it, to inflict upon the reader a detail of similar occurrences, all tending to prove the wonderful virtues possessed by the salmon-roe in gathering and concentrating trout, but the two instances above related are quite enough for my present purpose. They demonstrate the instinct of the fish to pry out its favourite food; they disclose to us that, for this end, it is gifted by nature with the most delicate perceptions; and more, they make us aware of the great extent of damage done, during the spawning season, to the deposits of the salmon, by the depredations of the common trout. It is solely upon this last-mentioned ground that I take my stand, when palliating the use of the salmon-roe as an angling bait, in certain rivers and seasons. I am of opinion, that in large waters frequented by salmon for the purpose of spawning, and also on their tributaries, the moderate employment of it, in a salted state, acts powerfully in diverting the attention of more than one species of prowler from the natural ova or deposit, a very large proportion of which is every year consumed, as well upon the redd of the fish itself as when carried down below it.

But while thus palliating the use of the roe as an ang-

ling bait, on rivers frequented by salmon, I would strictly set face against its employment on purely trouting waters. Upon these, if of small width, the injury it is possible to inflict with it might, for a season at least, prove very serious. Let me suppose, for instance, that it is brought into play, under favourable circumstances, on the Eden or Blackadder, two highly reputed streams in Berwickshire. I believe it practicable for one well versed in the use of it to strip, in the course of a few hours, to the extent of half a mile, either water mentioned, of three-fourths of the primest fish inhabiting it; and were he to pursue this system of devastation throughout, he would, in the course of a short time, nearly depopulate the whole range of pools, leaving only the pricked fish and a few dozen of stragglers to replenish them. Such extreme butchery would, of course, not only be condemned as unsportsmanlike, but as an outrage upon common sense and feeling; whereas the destruction of a few hundreds of mischievous fish, in a broad and plentifully stocked river, not only effects little injury to the trouting, but, as regards the protection of salmon spawn, confers an acknowledged benefit. I confess quite freely that the trout, immediately before and during close-time, are, with very few exceptions, rank and uneatable; but that is a matter with which the sport of capturing them has nothing at all to do. A kelted salmon affords sport in its own way; and I have seldom met with the angler who, on account of its being out of condition, despised running one.

**THE CURING OF SALMON-ROE.**—There are two or three ways of doing this peculiar to Tweedside. It is either cured entire—that is, as it is taken from the fish, in the form of what is provincially termed the *waim*; or it is reduced into a paste; or else it is converted to single particles, termed beads.

The first object of the curer is to obtain what is reckoned an available supply of roe. Much of the ingredient met with under that name is next thing to useless, the seed or ova being too small in the particle, or else, through an injury done to the fish from which they were taken, largely transfused with blood. In either case, and under other circumstances readily recognisable, it ought to be rejected. The roe best adapted for curing is found in what is called

the *baggit* fish, or ripe spawner—that is, a salmon on the eve of depositing its ova. It is most readily obtained on Tweedside at the commencement of the open season, although often to be procured, in a state of sufficient maturity, in the month of October. The beads or pellets should, unless intended to be cured in the way first mentioned, have attained their full size, equalling that of a small pea or swan-shot. They ought, moreover, to be distinct and easily separated, as well as of a high pink or brick colour.

In every preparation of this bait, the first step of the process is to cleanse the leaf, that is, to remove from it the clotted blood and other impurities which it may happen to have contracted. In some cases, when the roe is designed to be cured in the leaf, this may be done simply by the application of a cloth or towel. The natural juices are thus kept intact in their primitive condition. But it seldom happens that the leaf is so pure and undamaged as to allow of such a superficial mode of cleansing. Accordingly, in most cases, it is found essential to wash and pick it. To do this properly, use water slightly warmed, and mixed with a small quantity of milk. Perform the operation in a large hand-basin, and transfer, when cleansed, each leaf, layer, or fragment to a sieve or cullender, by means of which the superfluous fluid will most readily be drained off. Thus cleansed and strained, the roe is made fit for one or other of the processes of curing already alluded to.

The preparation of this bait in the leaf is very simple. The operator has merely to place the entire layers of ova in a small jar, sprinkling over them a handful or two of salt. He must then cover the vessel, so as entirely to exclude the air, with a piece of skin or leather. After remaining in this state for a day or two, if intended for early use, the roe, or any quantity of it, should be wrapt carefully up in a piece of flannel, (the foot of an old worsted stocking is often employed for this purpose,) and exposed to a slight pressure and some measure of heat, not exceeding in general 80 or 90 degrees. By this means, in the course of a few hours, it is rendered sufficiently tough for use; and when required to be prepared in a shorter period, the operator has only to expose it to a higher pressure and

a greater degree of heat. In curing roe in the leaf, salt-petre is sometimes employed, with the view of heightening its colour. I would recommend, however, that this ingredient be used very sparingly, as its flavour is by no means palatable to the fish, nor, indeed, are its effects in improving the natural colour of the bait otherwise than doubtful.

There are two modes of preparing pastes from the salmon-roë. The one I generally adopt is the least tedious, and although the ingredient produced from it is not so equal or thoroughly mixed up and broken as that of the other, it possesses all, and to spare, of its attractive virtues, being a compound of the bead and paste, and on this account insinuating itself into the good graces of bull-trout and whitling, which species of fish, I have generally experienced to be the case, give a preference to unbroken over finely reduced roë. The following is the method I observe in preparing it:—After cleansing, I proceed to break down the leaf, separating, as I do so, the beads and pellets from the films to which they are attached. I then throw over them a quantity of fine salt, in the proportion of three or four ounces or upwards to every pound of roë, and, stirring the mixture with the hand, incorporate all thoroughly. I also squeeze together, and occasion to burst, several handfuls of the beads, in order that, thus expressed, their adhesive contents may operate in binding and giving consistency to those left intact. This process concluded, I transfer the whole mass to a tin cullender, there to remain under cover for some hours, during which time a considerable quantity of oily matter becomes separated and drained off, the juices of the pellets being acted upon by the salt to this effect. When the draining has ceased, the paste is ready for use. If intended to be kept for some time, remove it into small pots, pressing it well down with the hand in filling, and running over it a little melted lard.

The other preparation of roë-paste alluded to, undergoes up to a certain stage the same process as the one above described. After the beads, however, have been separated, place them in a jug or deep jar, and by means of a small wooden shaft or pestle, bruise, mix, and stir them up vigorously, until every individual pellet has become broken

and dissolved, and the whole forms a thick, creamy-looking substance. During this operation, which is somewhat of a tedious one, and will occupy the person engaged in it at least an hour, a handful of salt ought from time to time to be added, as the dissolution of the particles proceeds. When all has been thoroughly incorporated and mixed up together, pour boiling water upon the mass, and it will instantly harden, and become formed into a solid lump of paste, capable of being removed by the hand. The water, be it again remarked, must be quite hot, and poured into the jug or basin containing the roe, not applied to it externally. This is the true secret of preparing salmon-roe paste.

Of the curing of this ingredient in the bead state I require to say little : it consists simply in the drying and packing up of the separated pellets, and requires no process beyond that of submitting them to the action of air and heat until sufficiently toughened, and then committing them to earthenware pots or small jars. In curing salmon-roe for bait, the preservation of its natural colour should always be kept in view. The sweetness of taste, also, is a matter upon which some English anglers lay great stress. If by that is meant freedom in the flavour of the roe from salt, I take the liberty of differing with them ; for there is no doubt that, independent of the properties of the roe itself, that substance possesses qualities of its own, highly attractive in their nature. These, in regard to wild animals of various kinds, are well known. They are exemplified in the instance of what is termed by the American hunter a salt lick, or moist spot of ground highly impregnated with the mineral in question. To this deer and game of all descriptions repair from great distances, lured by the inviting nature of the salt. I am of opinion, therefore, that the flavour of this substance is very agreeable to trout, in common with other animals, and that a measure of the success met with by the angler in fishing with salmon-roe is owing to its liberal use. I may mention, that the prepared milt of the kipper, or he-salmon, is said to be, equally with the roe of the spawner, an inviting bait to river-trout. In connection with its use as such, one singular circumstance has been observed, namely, that while the latter ingredient attracts chiefly male fish, (this

I know to be the fact,) the former possesses an irresistible influence over the females. The employment of the salmon-roë as a bait, seeing that it operates chiefly in thinning the number of males, which are supposed unnecessarily to haunt the breeding-places, may, therefore, as well as for the reasons already mentioned, be regarded as beneficial. I may state, however, that the same sexual discrimination is not exhibited by the *eriox*, or any of the sea-trout species; the females of which prey as greedily upon the salmon-roë as the males do.

I shall now very briefly direct the attention of the reader to the tackle best adapted for roë-fishing, interspersing a few instructions as to the proper mode of angling with this bait. The hook commonly used on Tweedside is a single one, No. 9 or 10, round-bend, tied on a good strong gut, as if for worm-fishing, in the coarse, ordinary style. A pair of these are frequently employed at one and the same time, fastened to the foot-line, at the distance of a yard from each other, the angler occasionally appending a worm instead of roë to the upper one. The salted leaf is what is generally made use of along with this description of tackle, and a small quantity of wool reckoned essential, in order to fix and secure the bait.

Such I observe to be the usual practice and contrivance of Tweedside fishers, in respect of the hook and manner of baiting. Mine is different, and, coupled with the plan I adopt when using this line, much superior. I always, for instance, employ a double hook—that is, two hooks, No. 6, 7, or 8, tied back to back, and pressed forwards, by means of the finger and thumb, so as to lie at right angles with each other. These serve sufficiently to retain or secure the bait, without resorting to wool or cotton fibres. The proper application of a small file to the shanks of each wire, will greatly contribute to strengthen the tying on, and fix the hooks in a desirable position. Leaf-roë I seldom fish with, preferring the mixed paste already described. I also employ strong, round gut, and weight or lead my line largely, in order to keep the bait from progressing too rapidly. In fishing with the salmon-roë, the general practice is to do so in bands or small companies, including three or four persons. A piece of water, held in repute from year to year as a *rowan* cast, is pitched upon and



baited with leaf-refuse, or loose particles of the ingredient. This range or beat generally extends from ten to thirty yards, the depth being from two to five feet, the bottom gravelly and free from impediments, and the current gradual. Each fisher, in his turn, commences at the head of the cast, follows his bait as it is carried onward by the stream, withdraws it at the agreed point of termination, and then repairs, as quickly as possible, back to the starting-post. This mode of fishing has certainly the attraction of being very sociable, but I have seldom observed it to prove productive. The trout are held by it over too large an extent of water, or, in other words, they are not sufficiently concentrated so as to insure ready or rapid sport. There are, besides, too much hurry and excitement created through the number of parties engaged; in fact, there exist at least half-a-dozen circumstances connected with this manner of fishing, all of which operate to its prejudice. I confess, however, that the habits of the bull-trout render it tolerably effective in the capture of that fish, the high impregnation of a considerable space of water with roe acting powerfully upon the senses of the species of trout in question, while on its way up the river.

As embodying a more approved method of fishing with the salmon-roe, I recommend the following instructions. Let the angler, provided with a stiffish single-handed rod, and the tackle already described, sally forth, either alone, or consorted at most with one companion in arms. He may either betake himself to one of the accustomed beats, if not previously occupied by another party, or pitch upon some untried piece of water, which, although of limited range, possesses the same qualities of depth, speed, and bottom. Near the head of this he ought to select his stance or post, on a dry and unexposed portion of the bank. There is no necessity, on commencing operations, that he should bait the spot. This, in the course of a few throws, will be done quite sufficiently, without occasioning, as the other practice does, the gorging and repletion of a portion of the fish farther down. In throwing, the angler should generally employ a short line, not much exceeding his rod in length, and occasionally a good deal shorter. He can always, in that highly-discoloured state of water in which the salmon-roe is most effective as a bait, entice his spoil

to within a yard's distance from the margin. Accordingly, he loses no advantage by employing the description of line I have recommended, and in the matter of striking acquires a very important one. Sometimes, however, in certain localities, and when bull-trout or whitlings are observed moving in his vicinity, it may be expedient to increase the length of his cast or throw ; also, in brown or fine waters, it is essential to do so.

In baiting with the mixed or other paste, let the angler extract a small portion, equal in size to a horse-bean, from the pot or jar. This may be done readily, by means of an old pocket-knife or other sharp-pointed instrument. He requires then to insert the bait in question betwixt the projecting barbs of his hooks, in the angle formed by their junction. A slight pressure of the forefinger will assist greatly in attaching it, but it is not necessary to conceal, as in worm-fishing, every portion of the wire. When casting, the angler ought to be extremely cautious lest, by excess of force, he should occasion his bait to drop off. He will find it preferable to pitch it out gently from him, instead of throwing the line over his shoulder. This, in general, he requires to do partially up and against the stream, not forward, and at right angles with the bank, as is practised under the ordinary style of roe-fishing. He must then allow the bait to sink rapidly, and travel at a measured rate along the bottom or channel. When checked without any apparent reason, he ought to consider it as seized by a fish, and on such occasions to act as if it were so, striking home in the direction of the current. Commonly, however, the bite or nibble of the trout is unmistakable, although seldom, except in the case of parr and small fry, very vigorous. The attack by a good fish upon this kind of bait is quite distinct from what it is upon the worm. He appears, in general, rather to suck at it than seize it—to roll it about in his mouth, as one would a comfit, not to bite or rend it. His instinct, in fact, occasions him to regard the salmon-roë as inert, unresisting matter, while all other substances he is wont to prey upon possess life, motion, and the power of escape.

In the mode of fishing recommended, the angler, as already hinted, ought to restrict his operations to a single spot in the range or beat occupied by him. Doing so, he

will most effectually concentrate the feeding trout, and render available a great proportion of his casts. He should on all occasions keep his line *taut*, sounding, as it were, the bottom with the leads attached to it, and holding on the alert, in case of any sudden strain or stoppage arising from the interference of a fish with his bait. On favourable days, this will happen in the course of every cast or throw taken by him, and he has only to strike at the proper moment in order to secure the trout. It is scarcely necessary for me to add further instructions upon this subject. A practical lesson or two will avail, beyond all written advice. I shall, accordingly, do little more than append a single remark as to the condition of water and state of the atmosphere best adapted to the kind of fishing under notice.

October and November being unquestionably the most suitable months,—a flooded river during one or other of them is the sure index of sport. The proper moment for commencing operations is when the water, on its decrease, has begun to assume a yellow or light-brown appearance—the particles of sand and soil being still, to some extent, in an unsettled state. From this period, until it merges into the deeper-brown or black consequent upon most autumnal floods, the salmon-roe may be successfully\* fished with. Bull-trout and whitlings are aptest to take it during their ascent from the sea, and at an early stage in the decrease of the river; in fact, when its waters are too thick and large for the common fresh-water trout. Calm, frosty weather immediately succeeding a flood is favourable for roe-fishing. If fresh and warm, the sport is generally indifferent, the fish seldom, on such occasions, displaying much avidity. They appear also to congregate with greater tardiness, their appetites and perceptions being apparently duller. Eels, however, form an exception to this rule. Even in the depth of winter, when they are supposed by many naturalists to have deserted their fresh-water abodes and betaken themselves to the sea, they may be enticed from their sloughy covers, on mild sunny days, by the scent of salmon-roe. I recollect, some years ago, killing several with this bait in the beginning of January, and, had I been disposed, might easily, on the same occasion, have filled my creel with them. I have also caught chub in the

middle of winter, as well as in other seasons of the year, with the roe preparation.

After ransacking a beat or cast with this bait, it is advisable, on some occasions, to have recourse to the worm, in order to pick up, if possible, one or two of the shy or gorged fish that are likely to remain on or near the spot. By adopting this plan, I have more than once hit upon a bull-trout, the only one of the day ; which fish, on such an occasion, I always found replete with the roe-bait. This it managed to pick up on the trail of my hook, or possibly detach from the wire by its own exertions. A combination of the roe and worm is, as I have already stated, frequently resorted to in the ordinary mode of practice on Tweedside. It is sometimes also put in force in the summer season, in small clear waters, the roe being used in the bead form, not actually as a bait, but as an incitement. In fact, at such times it is employed as a mere appendage to the worm, being supposed to attract the trout to the spot, and give them an opportunity of seizing the latter or live bait. Before concluding this chapter, I think it proper once more to disclaim all partiality in behoof of the salmon-roë as an angling bait, beyond the favouring of its occasional use in rivers and streams frequented by the salmon tribe. To these solely it ought to be restricted. I would, on the other hand, most strenuously discountenance its employment on purely trouting waters, urging it as the duty of every true lover of our stream-side recreations to do so likewise.

## CHAPTER IX.

## THE SALMON.

ITS STAGES.—Parr ; Smolt or Black Fin ; Grilse ; Salmon.

FIN-RAYS.—Dorsal, 13 ; Pectoral, 12 ; Ventral, 9 ; Anal, 9 ; Caudal, 19.—*Vertebrae*, 60.

GENERIC CHARACTERS.—Head smooth ; body covered with scales ; two dorsal fins, the first supported by rays, the second fleshy, without rays ; teeth on the vomer, both palatine bones, and all the maxillary bones ; branchiostegous rays varying in number, generally from ten to twelve, but sometimes unequal on the two sides of the head of the same fish.—*Yarrell*, vol. ii. p. 1.

AMONG objects closely associated with the sublime and beautiful, I cannot help classing the noble fish, of which it is my purpose to treat in the following pages. The elegance of its form, the justness of its proportions, its glittering and gorgeous apparel, all entitle it to rank loftily in the scale of beauty ; while its size and noble bearing, its strength and velocity, the rocks, torrents, and whirlpools among which it glides familiar, unite in some degree to elevate its pretensions, and give it place withal amid creations of sublimity. That it stands unrivalled among the variety of fishes, extending to many hundreds in number, which inhabit the flood, there can be little question. The dolphin, famed in poetry, whose glowing surface may be termed the pallet of nature, the mullet, the opah or king-fish, the carp, dorie, and sturgeon, all yield before it the submissive palm. Nor is it undistinguished, independent of its shape and beauty, by certain instincts and properties, which elevate it still higher above the rest of the finny tribes.

One of these, the foremost in rank, is the freedom it possesses of transporting itself from the saline abysses of

ocean into rivers and lakes; the capability, in fact, of existing and enjoying its existence within two distinct media, differing from each other in taste, in gravity, in motion, and in produce. Certain fish, it is true, such as sturgeon and mullet, eels and flounders, forsake, like the salmon, their sea-haunts, and betake themselves into fresh water. Yet never do we hear of these, or any others, penetrating far inland, and overcoming the strong currents and rapids, with which many rivers abound in the upper districts. To the salmon alone this capacity belongs, and is exercised by its several species, in degrees apportioned to their strength and inclinations. For instance, the *eriox* or bull-trout, one of these species which, although seldom attaining the size of the full-grown *salar*, is on the whole a more powerful and venturesome fish, becomes led by its instincts to the very heads and sources of the rivers it frequents, and is sometimes found shedding its spawn in feeders where it is scarcely able to turn itself.

ITS INTERNAL COLOUR.—Among those peculiarities which distinguish the salmon tribe (*salmonidæ*) from other fishes, I shall also take notice of the pink or reddish colour of its flesh—a distinction which, to the best of my knowledge, it holds in common with none of the finny creation, the tunny excepted. Several naturalists ascribe this colour or complexion to the description of food upon which it subsists in the salt water. Dr Knox holds that it is derived from the ova of various kinds of *echinodermata*, and some of the *crustacea*. Others again affirm that it is induced by a species of sea-weed, although they prudently forbear condescending any further upon the matter. Without altogether rejecting such opinions as incorrect, I cannot help asking how it happens that, in absence of all marine sustenance whatsoever, trout and charr (themselves, it is true, belonging to the same family, but inhabiting fresh-water lakes and streams) acquire, in many instances, the hue referred to. That it proceeds, in their case, as well as that of the marine salmon, from some virtue or peculiarity in the food supplied by them, is very possible. To all who have studied the habits and nature of the *fario*, or common fresh-water trout, it is well known that its internal colour is largely affected by the quality of its subsistence, and that this fish, when taken from a river or streamlet, (where,

if suffered to remain season after season, it would assume no tinge of redness whatsoever,) and transferred to a lake or pond containing marl or other rich food, speedily acquires the high complexion in question, independent of other changes, elsewhere dilated on.—(See chap. i.)

This is true; but is there nothing connected with the transformation spoken of to be traced to the fish itself—no inherent tendency, analogous to that which flowers possess, to disclose, under certain circumstances, a particular hue or tinge of colour? They, too, (flowers,) depend, to some extent, for their tints and richness of bloom on the sustenance they are supplied with, or, what is the same thing, on the soils and climates, the manures and moistures, which nourish and refresh them. Still this sustenance is in no case the direct occasion of any particular hue disclosed by the blossom; otherwise, in plants that live on the same chemical substances, and are reared together on the same soil, the tints and colours unfolded would always be the same, without the possibility of their varying; whereas it is well known this is not the case, every plant possessing a virtue of its own, which is the secret or origin of its colour, although acted upon in many instances, as florists inform us, by change of circumstances. What I have stated in respect to flowers holds good also as regards trout and salmon. The kind and quality of their food contribute, no doubt, to bring out or exclude the colour spoken of; but this colour is one that really appertains to the fish, and is by no means derived from the sustenance taken by it. Were such the case, perch and other fresh-water fishes, subsisting on the same kinds of food that trout do, would frequently, like them, acquire the pink or red colour spoken of.

Of whatever force these observations are, as respects the question at issue, one thing is clear, that the salmon proper, whether they derive their high colour from marine sustenance or not, are possessed of it in common with fresh-water trout and charr—fishes that have no access to the aliment mentioned by Dr Knox and other naturalists. I may also state a fact well known on Tweedside, and bearing upon the matter in hand, namely, that although salmon, after their entrance into fresh water, do undoubtedly, after a time, lose a portion of their high colour, in

the same manner as trout and charr do, on becoming what is technically called foul ; yet, as is well known, this property is, to some extent, recovered by them after parting with their spawn or milt, before returning to the sea as kelts.

In reality, however, this question is one of no great esteem or consequence, and may be regarded only as a groundwork for the views of some naturalists, in respect to the marine food of the salmon.

ITS FOOD.—That the salmon has, like many other fishes, the power of sustaining existence upon minute particles of food—nay, that it is very possible for it to acquire its bulk and delicate richness from aliment, to our ideas so scant and precarious as marine animalculæ—cannot be denied ; still, before positively deciding the matter, and leaping to a conclusion, the sole basis of which is vague and fictitious, there can be no harm in demanding one moment's investigation of those parts in the structure of the fish, which are adapted by Providence for the seizure and ingulfment of its prey.

The salmon, as is well known, is furnished with strong jaws or mandibles—a mouth somewhat capacious, and armed, as well as the tongue, with sharp teeth. It possesses, moreover, a broad gullet, capable of passing at one gulp no inconsiderable quantity of food. Provided with these powers and functions, it is at least reasonable to suppose that the inclination to use them is not withheld from their possessor. The fact, however, and it is certainly a singular one, that in few instances on record, food of a corresponding description has been discovered in the stomach of the salmon proper, has led to the conviction, on the part of several naturalists, that it subsists almost entirely on marine insects and ova, too minute for the naked eye to distinguish. To get rid of this difficulty, it has been affirmed by some that the stomach of the fish acts upon the food absorbed with a rapidity resembling that of fire. Others, again, assert that the salmon is wont, when in danger of being captured by net or rod, to disgorge what it has swallowed, relieving itself by this process of whatever might help to impair its speed or paralyse its energies. I have remarked that the pike, when hooked, often parts with the contents of its stomach. On one occasion, a large fel-



low which I had hold of, and eventually secured, shot out, while in the act of taking his most desperate spring, a couple of eels, each of them at least sixteen inches in length ; but it is quite possible that in this case, as well as in others which have fallen under my notice, the result mentioned may have been caused solely by the irritative working of the hook, and not in obedience to any law of instinct implanted in the fish. To discover what occurs with respect to the salmon, under similar circumstances, would require a faculty of perception in the visual organs few are possessed of. I am not, however, I confess, disinclined to believe that a fish which engages discussion by the contradictory appearances it presents, namely, that of its being furnished with voracious jaws and teeth, as well as an expansive gullet, while the stomach, on almost every occasion, is found void and inactive, must be possessed of extraordinary resources ; nor am I altogether incredulous in respect to what has been related of the power of the digestive organs in some fishes, and the celerity with which these consume the food intrusted to them. I have in my possession two hooks—one, an Irish tempered bait-hook, taken from the inside of a small trout, the other a large double gorge hook, extracted from the stomach of a pike, both of which present the appearance of their having been subjected to some powerful corrosive. The state of the smaller one along the shank has actually been reduced into a black substance, which, betwixt the pressure of finger and thumb, crumbles into powder ; whereas the larger piece of wire has been rendered completely attenuated, and is figured over with streaks or water-lines, the entire hook having been exposed to the action of the stomach. The power of the gastric juices in both these instances has been fully denoted, and finds further exemplification in the facility with which river trout of an insignificant size can digest shell-fish and horn-coated insects of various sorts. With such proofs before me, I feel little hesitation in yielding to the opinion that the digestive organs of the salmon proper are of such power as to account in part for the seeming anomaly which the voracious character of its jaws and gullet, when contrasted with the void condition of the stomach, present to the eye of the examiner.

It may be held, then, as established, that the usual food

of the salmon—that upon which its growth and richness principally depend—is in harmony with its predatory structure. According to eminent naturalists, Mr Yarrell, Dr Fleming, Sir W. Jardine, and others, its favourite food consists of small fishes, among which the sand-eel is particularly mentioned. Sir W. Jardine says, “In the north of Sutherland a mode of fishing for salmon is sometimes successfully practised in the firths, where sand-eels are used as bait; a line is attached to a buoy or bladder, and allowed to float with the tide up the narrow estuaries. The salmon are also said to be occasionally taken at the lines set for haddocks, baited with sand-eels.”

While on the north coast of Sutherland, in 1850, I met with more than one party, who mentioned to me having captured salmon and grilises in the manner above described. Besides the sand-eel, the young of the herring, or what is commonly termed in Scotland “the sile,” may be held as favourite food with the salmon. I recollect on one occasion, 10th June, 1836, on the Nairnshire coast, seeing a fine fish captured by the net, along with some dozens of sea-trout, which had been feasting upon the fry in question, three specimens of which lay enthralled within its jaws. The sea-trout were crammed with prey of the same description. Another kind of fish esteemed as food by the salmon is the shrimp. This is a peculiar favourite; and I have heard it asserted, that in the rivers connected with estuaries, where the shrimp is abundant, salmon are more numerous than in those, although they happen to be contiguous, which have no such feeding-ground below them. Perhaps this remark holds good rather in relation to sea-trout than salmon; and curious instances of its truth in that respect may be adduced in regard to several of the Sutherlandshire rivers. I shall confine myself, in illustration, to one of these instances. I take the rivers Inver and Laxford, on the west coast of the county, and running almost parallel to each other, at a distance, as the crow flies, of not more than twenty miles. They convey to the sea about an equal quantity of water, and although their courses differ a little in length, that of the one being about five miles, while the other does not exceed three, there is this stronger feature of resemblance about them, that both proceed from lakes of considerable magnitude, the one

from Loch Assynt communicating higher up with Loch Awe, and the other from Loch Stack, which also has its communication with an upper range of water. Both the Inver and Laxford hold a reputation as salmon streams ; that acquired by the latter approaching, among rod-fishers, to renown, while the former surpasses mediocrity ; but it is with regard to the proportion of sea-trout respectively haunting their pools and sources that the contrast betwixt the two rivers is most strikingly exemplified. In favour of the Laxford and Loch Stack, this proportion may be stated at ten to one, when set off against the Inver and Loch Assynt ; indeed, in Loch Assynt it is a rare thing to capture a sea-trout at all, although this splendid sheet of water appears in every respect as well qualified, if not more so, to afford shelter, sustenance, and breeding-ground to the *salmo trutta* as Loch Stack. The ascent to it, also, is easy, and, I would say, more conformable to the pushing propensities of the fish. It is solely, however, to the difference in the marine feeding-ground at the mouths of the respective rivers that I attribute the disproportion spoken of. In the case of the Inver, this feeding-ground is confined to a narrow space ; there are few patches suited to afford a constant supply of nutriment in the shape of sand-eels, shrimps, &c., the prevailing bottom being formed of rocks, stones, and wave-washed tangles ; whereas the mouth of the Laxford is accommodated with a large surface of beautiful pasture, in the shape of sandy creeks or bays, which are shallow, and admirably protected from the agitation of the Atlantic, so that they afford, at all seasons, and in liberal measure, a supply of the sustenance I am referring to.

With regard to the shrimp, as forming part of the customary marine food of the salmon, I have heard anglers allege that the jerking motions frequently given to the artificial fly by the rod-fisher, bear a close resemblance to those of this little shell-fish ; in short, to this peculiar play of the lure they attribute, more than to any other cause, the readiness of the salmon to approach and seize it. With this opinion I am not inclined to coincide ; but, as it is held by a sportsman of great celebrity, I think it proper to notice it.

The food and feeding instincts of the salmon, during its

stay in fresh water, have been pretty accurately ascertained. Fish that ascend solely for spawning purposes are naturally enough less intent upon feeding than those which visit the river, as the spring or clean salmon do, for a different object. The latter, accordingly, seize with greater avidity the lures presented to them, whether in the shape of fly, parr-tail, minnow, or lob-worm; so also do the kelts, or spawned fish, during their descent in the spring season; and, with respect to fish ascending for spawning purposes, which all grilises and salmon, running, after the month of June, up to the close of the season, are presumed to do, those nearest maturity are, generally speaking, least inclined to feed: I do not say, however, that they will not, even when at the eve, or in the act, of spawning, accept on occasions the baits of the angler; all I affirm is, that fish, heavy with roe or milt, are less intent upon feeding than those which are not so encumbered.

THE BREEDING OF SALMON.—The natural history of the salmon has of recent years engaged largely the attention of the public. As the produce of our British rivers, an article of food and commercial speculation, held in the highest esteem both at home and abroad, no wonder this royal fish should engage inquiry in various quarters. By no other preliminary means, indeed, than a careful investigation into its habits and instincts, can we expect to see carried, in regard to it, such a course of enactments as will both prevent all likelihood of its extirpation, and secure to the public a fixed and seasonable supply of so invaluable a commodity.

Every experiment ventured for the purpose of unravelling its history ought to be looked upon with interest, every discovery made with respect to it hailed with satisfaction; nor, in default of such discoveries, should disregard be paid to opinions, based upon observation and a knowledge of the comparative habits of animals.

Among the discoveries of the day, pertaining to the salmon, those which relate to its breeding, the ripening and hatching of the ova, the growth of the smolt, and its identity with the parr or fingerling, are not the least remarkable. The disclosures made upon these points are, it is almost unnecessary to state, the result of experiments conducted by Mr Shaw, Drumlanrig, and Mr Young, Invershin. I cannot sufficiently praise the motive which

induced such gratuitous labours in behalf of this department of science, nor shall I withhold my testimony to the extreme, I would almost say fastidious, care and attention which distinguished the experiments I refer to.

Several of Mr Shaw's specimens, the actual produce of the Drumlanrig ponds, were submitted some years ago to my inspection; and I had the pleasure, in 1850, of examining, step by step, the entire collection of preserved ovoides, illustrative of the hatching and breeding processes, as they were conducted at Invershin. With regard to the hatching of the ova, it has been ascertained that it is completed within a period ranging from ninety to a hundred and thirty-five days, according to the temperature of the water in which the pellets happen to be exposed. When at 45°, the young are hatched within ninety days; but should the mean height of the thermometer not exceed 36°, a hundred and fourteen days and upwards are required. On the young fish emerging from the external membrane, the remains of the yolk continue attached to them, and are not completely absorbed until the expiration of four or five weeks, during which period they act in the place of nourishment. The period occupied in the hatching of the ova, as well as that taken up in the consumption of the bag or membrane, is differently stated, I may mention, by the two observers; but the variance in the result of their experiments may, according to Mr Shaw's own showing, be easily accounted for, and was due, no doubt, to the dissimilarity of temperature to which the ova were subjected in their respective localities—a dissimilarity which may have affected as much the absorption of the external membrane, as it did the bringing to life of the ova themselves.

A much more important subject of difference in the observations of Mr Shaw and Mr Young, is as regards the period during which the parr, or infant fish, continues in our rivers, before assuming its migratory dress. Mr Young holds that this period is limited to a twelvemonth; Mr Shaw extends it over two years. For my own part, I lean strongly to the opinions expressed by Mr Young, who, it may be observed, has a thousand opportunities for one that Mr Shaw, on the banks of the Nith, (a very indifferent salmon-river,) is afforded, for observing the habits and instincts of the fish in its free state. The views

expressed by Mr Shaw are grounded plainly upon experiments made in the Drumlanrig ponds, where the fry, having been cooped up within artificial embankments, and deprived of all the advantages which, over an open stretch of river, they would otherwise have received, become, to a certain extent, altered as to their habits and instincts. In corroboration of which opinion, I may remark, that after the general descent of the Tweed smolts, (which is accomplished, in ordinary years, before the middle of May,) there are found in the river and its tributaries, along with the infant fry, of two inches in length, a limited number of parrs, evidently the product of the same year, or cotemporaneous with the smolts themselves, but which, from some cause or another, had not assumed the migratory garb, and were indisposed to quit their fresh-water abode. With these stragglers anglers on Tweedside are well acquainted. They often form matter of discussion betwixt them, and at one time were produced in support of their theory, who affirmed that the parr was a distinct species or variety of trout. The limited number and large size of such fish (I have seen them of the weight of  $5\frac{1}{2}$  oz.) preclude the idea that they form anything but exceptions to the general law, which undoubtedly is, that parrs of a year's growth assume the migratory garb, and quit the rivers in shoals or masses. As to the causes which delay the assumption of the silver scale, as well as their descent to the sea, on the part of these stragglers, I do not hesitate to affirm that they approximate closely to those causes which influence the Drumlanrig parrs. Mr Shaw and his supporters will probably say that such exceptions as I am referring to are parrs of the third year. If so, what has become of those a twelve-month behind them? For, in the months of May and June, you find in Tweed no other class of parrs sufficient in point of size to take the lures of the angler; nor can you discern, or capture with the hand-net, any, save the infant fry themselves, at that time seldom exceeding two inches in length; whereas, according to Mr Shaw's belief, the river ought to swarm with one-year-old parrs, of  $3\frac{1}{2}$  inches and upwards.\*

\* My friend Ephemera draws a distinction, in his Handbook of the Salmon, betwixt the "parr" and the proper fry of the salmon. The

Having seen it stated lately in a weekly newspaper, that this point of difference betwixt Mr Shaw and Mr Young had been satisfactorily arranged, I take the freedom of introducing the following extract from a letter, dated "Invershin, 24th January 1853," in which the opinion of the latter observer on this subject is consistently maintained: "The fry remain in the river one whole year, from the time they are hatched to the time they assume the silvery coat, and take their first departure for the sea. All the experiments we have made on the ova and fry of the salmon have exactly corresponded to the same effect, and none of them have taken longer in arriving at the smolt than the first year."

MIGRATION OF SALMON FRY.—In connection with the growth of the salmon fry, it may be mentioned, in order to account for the diversity of sizes in the Tweed parrs and smolts, compared with what, in that respect, distinguishes the infant fish of our Highland rivers, that the spawning season on our Border streams extends from October to the end of April. I have caught, on more occasions than one, unspawned grilises in the beginning of May, many of whose compeers were in as highly an advanced state during the middle of the preceding autumn, or nearly eight months back. In no one season that I can recollect of, during a residence of sixteen years on Tweedside, have the active breeding months fallen short of five or six—a stretch of time quite sufficient to account for that diversity in the sizes of the parrs and smolts to which attention has been frequently called. It is during the migrations of the fry especially that this diversity attracts notice; and I have often been asked to explain why the migrating smolts, passing Kelso in April or May, are of smaller size, and more numerous, than the parrs of the bygone October were in the same locality? To this inquiry, my invariable answer is: "These smolts, now descending in large bodies, are from the upper part of the river and its tributaries, which, if you take the trouble to proceed to and investigate, you will find at present nearly vacated. They are the accumulated produce of

proper fry of the salmon is, and from time immemorial has been, the "parr or garrat" of Tweed, the parr of Tay, Teith, and all our Scottish rivers. Why change the designation?

a late succession of fish, which the floods of winter had assisted to carry up to the higher spawning-grounds, and were hatched, in all probability, a twelvemonth ago, from deposits of ova cast in January, February, or March ; whereas the local parrs were, in some measure—I do not say altogether—the produce of an earlier succession of fish, those that ascended during the autumnal months, and spawned in the lower parts of the main river. Of these latter, it is only reasonable to suppose that a large proportion have already gone down to the sea in advance of the main body, and that they commenced doing so, while the migratory dress was still incomplete, in the beginning of March, or even February. This early descent of smolts, not being accompanied by any accumulation of numbers, but carried on gradually without show, may have escaped notice ; but that it takes place in Tweed and other rivers, there can be little doubt : indeed, how otherwise are we to account for the appearance of grilse in the months of May and June, in some instances not three weeks after the descent of the general body of salmon fry ? ”

CONFINED SMOLTS.—Salmon fry may be kept alive in fresh-water ponds for three, four, or even six years. It cannot be expected that, during this state of confinement, their condition will greatly improve, or that the change from the smolt stage to that of the grilse will be characterised by a rapidity of growth corresponding, in the slightest degree, to what accompanies the same process of transition when undergone in salt water. A change, however, does take place, and the fry eventually assume all the features which distinguish the proper grilse. I was favoured, in the spring of 1850, with a package containing several specimens of young salmon, newly captured, which had been transferred as parrs, four years before, from the Yarrow to a pond at Bowhill, the seat of His Grace the Duke of Buccleuch. These specimens of imprisoned smolts were all pretty much of the same length, eleven inches and upwards. They were as plentifully coated with silver scales as newly-run grilse. A fine sea-green colour pervaded the back, and they uniformly displayed, in the bearing of the head and tail, as well as the disposition of their fins and *maculæ*, the



characteristic markings of the species they belong to. The effects, however, of the restraint they had undergone were manifest in their lank state of body. As regarded breadth, depth, and girth, they were shrunk to half their dimensions; and instead of exceeding a pound, as from its length might have been expected, the heaviest of them all weighed short of seven ounces. On cutting two of them up with my penknife, I found the flesh to be of a beautiful salmon colour, and the roe-leaf, in both, small but perfectly formed.

On the 13th of June 1851, I had an opportunity of angling in the pond from which these had been taken, and where a considerable number of their fellow captives still remained. They probably do so to this day. One of these I was not long in securing, and a singular specimen it presented (as can be testified by Mr D. Robertson of Kelso, and Mr James Keress, head gamekeeper at Bowhill, who were with me on the occasion) of a salmon fry acted on by lengthy restraint. A she-fish it was, on the eve of getting rid, if practicable under the circumstances, of a complement of diseased ova, along with which were discovered, on examination, the lobes of roe requisite to form an ulterior deposit. The diseased pellets, although belonging to a fish not so large as an ordinary-sized herring, were, one and all of them, bigger than a sweet pea—in fact, approached individually the size of matured grilse ova. The number, of course, was limited. With respect to the after-growth, each lobe was fully an inch and a half in length, and consisted of particles as large as turnip seed.

SEA-TROUT FRY.—The identity of the black-fin smolt with the parr or fingerling having been established beyond all doubt, there remains a question for which, among the discoveries of the day and the opinions of eminent naturalists, I have in vain sought a solution; and this question is connected with the appearance during the smolt season of another species of fry, commonly called the orange-fin, or young of the sea-trout. These, during the month of April, are found in incredible numbers haunting most of our Border rivers, and associated with the masses of black-fins on their descent to the sea; but the strange thing is, that, although invariably they are larger, and apparently of greater age than the others, there is no indication of their

existence in the parr state, or at any other period, except what is termed the smolt season, in the streams I refer to. That they hold no relation to the true parr whatsoever, is at once acknowledged by all who have seen them. The markings on the gill cover are quite different, and the removal of the scales or smolt plumage reveals nothing at all resembling the blue finger-marks which distinguish the fry of the *salar*. Is it possible, I ask, that they are the produce of the bygone spawning season? If so, their dimensions at the age of two or three months (the generality of them cannot be older, seeing that the great bulk of sea-trout ascending our Border river for spawning purposes does not make its appearance until the latter end of October, when the net-fishings are suspended) exceed those of the black-fin smolt upwards of a year, Mr Shaw would say upwards of two years, old—a circumstance certainly strange and inconsistent, but one which we are necessarily forced to admit, until, from what are supposed to be entirely the fry of the common river-trout, we can separate a portion bearing the specific markings of the sea-trout, and justly entitled to be considered as their parrs or yearlings. In the salt water, the orange-fin smolt is not distinguished by any remarkable celerity of growth. While resident at the mouth of the Moray Firth, in 1836, I had several opportunities of ascertaining this fact. During the summer evenings, six or seven weeks after the general descent of the smolts belonging to the Nairn water, I occasionally, when the tide was full, took a few throws with the fly, in hopes of capturing a sea-trout or two, hundreds of which were crowding in along the line of coast, and leaping almost within rod's-length of the heach. Although not very successful in securing full-grown specimens, I invariably caught a number of orange-fins, none of which struck me as distinguished by much increase of size, or even change of external appearance, on account of their stay in the sea. There might, indeed, be a trifle more of fulness in their proportions—and I think they displayed a thicker and firmer set coating of scales, although upon these points I pretend not to accuracy; still there was nothing about their growth to favour the idea that they could possibly, during that season at least, acquire the dimensions of the whitling, or even the full-grown finnock. I may mention,

however, that in July I caught fish, evidently of the same hatching, in the Nairn water, on their ascent in the shape of small finnock, none of which exceeded half a pound in weight.

MARINE GROWTH OF THE SALMON.—This comparatively speaking tardy transition of the orange-fin into the finnock or sea-trout, taken in conjunction with its unaccountable appearance as a smolt in our rivers, and rapid growth while there, is not less singular than are the facts ascertained as to the celerity with which the black-fin of three or four ounces is converted into the grilse of five or six pounds. Experiments on various rivers, and by various parties, have been made, which bid fair to establish, if they have not already done so, this point of importance in the natural history of the salmon. The Duke of Atholl, Messrs Hogarth of Aberdeen, Mr Young of Invershin, and others, have all and severally contributed to give verification to what has long been the prevailing opinion of fishermen as to the rapid conversion of the black-fin smolt into the grilse. Their experiments also prove the identity of the grilse with the salmon, and the corresponding celerity with which this ulterior stage of transition becomes effected under marine influences. In a pamphlet published in 1848, on *The Natural History and Habits of the Salmon*, Mr Young states: "We have marked the smolts with various marks, and for a twofold purpose—first, to ascertain if they actually returned to the same rivers; and secondly, to ascertain how long they remained in the sea before they returned to the rivers. From these repeated experiments and observations, we have arrived at the facts of their actual habits. First, we marked the smolts by a perforation in the caudal fin. This was done by particular nipping irons, expressly made for the purpose, and the markings took place at different times during the months of April and May. In the course of the months of June and July following, we caught them returning to the rivers beautiful grilses, varying from three to eight pounds, the difference being entirely regulated by the length of time they had remained in the sea, and none of them being found but in the rivers where they were marked. Again, in the following months of April and May, we marked a number of the descending smolts by

cutting the adipose or dead fin clean off the back, and we found them returning to the rivers where they were marked with the same punctuality as the others had done which had the perforated marks. Although it is unnecessary to particularise all the repeated markings and returnings, all of which tended to the same facts, we may mention that specimens of these may be seen in the Royal Society's Museum in Edinburgh, with an exact account of their goings and returnings, all of which show the length of time they remain in the sea, as well as their punctuality in returning to the rivers where they were bred."

In the same pamphlet Mr Young quotes a singular instance of the rapid increase of weight which salmon are capable of acquiring while in salt water. "Among many others, in March 1845, in the river Tay, near Dunkeld, his grace the Duke of Athol caught a spawned salmon ten pounds weight, which he then marked with a zinc ticket, No. 129, and returned it to the river, and, of course, very soon afterwards it had gone down to the sea. In the short space of five weeks and three days, the same salmon, with the ticket attached to it, was caught returning from the sea on a fishing station at Pitfour; and when caught, it weighed twenty-one pounds and a quarter, being an increase of eleven pounds and a quarter in the short space of five weeks and three days!"

An opinion prevails at present on Tweedside that the smolts remain a year and upwards in the sea, before ascending as grilse. A marked smolt of 1851, it is alleged, was captured as a grilse in 1852. On this subject Mr Young, in explanation, writes: "As the result of all our experiments, the smolts that go down to the sea in the spring are the grilse of that season. I have seen smolts in February, and have caught grilse in April. We have always a number of smolts going down in March, and a number of grilse in May. We have the great throng of smolts descending in April and May, and the principal throng of grilse ascending in June and July. This only takes place in regard to rivers where the fish are allowed to have their natural course, and not at all in regard to such as the Tweed, where they destroy the principal breeders before the netting is closed: any fish left in such rivers are entirely thrown out of the regular course ap-

pointed by nature, and these fish, of course, can neither have a natural feeding-time nor breeding-time. In all our marking of smolts, and that was done frequently, we never yet had the fortune, or rather the misfortune, to get one grilse, as a grilse, the second year after marking." Again, "Spawned salmon and grilses, when marked in their foul state, have never been known to remain at sea much more than two months."

The black-fin smolt, after its descent into the salt-water, until the period when it ascends as a grilse, does not, I have reason to believe, wander to any great distance from the breeding river. The limit of its peregrinations coast-wise extends, in the average, to ten or twelve miles; but where there is a firth, such as that of the Forth or Moray, its range is much greater. The grilses of July and August, which ascend in shoals, proceed from localities very near the mouth of the breeding stream, where they are naturally more crowded. The late-running fish of this description are chiefly stragglers from a greater distance, or such as are kept back by the presence of stake-nets at the entrance of the river. These, during calm, clear weather, they readily detect, and, until discovering a free passage, will continue in their vicinity, often for weeks together.

Salmon at no stage, except in regard to their fresh-water excursions, are migratory fish. They very rarely leave our coasts, but not unfrequently, in their wanderings, lose reckoning of their native stream, and ascend other rivers. Thus, a Forth salmon is sometimes found in Tweed, a Tay fish in Forth, and so on. It is quite ridiculous to talk of their Arctic voyages. I do not believe that even the her-ring travels far from where it is captured. It only retires from the surface, to which, at certain seasons, it rises in great shoals; and this is proved by the fact that, in the west coast of Scotland, many of the lochs or estuaries possess severally their peculiar breed of this fish, which breed or variety is never captured at a distance from its native arm of the sea, either entering or returning. As illustrations, I mention the herrings of Loch Broom, Loch Torridon, Loch Carron, and Loch Fyne, each of which salt-water estuaries contains its distinctly marked breed or variety.

While touching on this subject, I may state, that not

only every main salmon-river throughout Scotland possesses a breed of its own, quite recognisable by the experienced eye, but even the tributaries of those rivers, such, of course, as are frequented by breeding fish, give birth to a peculiar variety. There ascend Conan, for instance, four varieties of the salmon: its own, and those of its three principal feeders, the Rasay or Blackwater, the Orrin, and the Meig. The breed peculiar to one river is also capable of being transferred to another, while in the condition of ova or unhatched spawn. Mr Buist of Perth, and Mr Young of Invershin, have proved this by various experiments.

It has been asserted, that, in order to spawn, salmon do not require to enter the fresh water at all, and that hundreds effect that object along the line of coast, in bays, creeks, and marine lochs.

That salmon, or even sea-trout, ever deposit their ova in salt-water, is a mere conjecture, unconfirmed by a single fact or incident falling under the observation of those that form it. It is, moreover, a conjecture rendered greatly improbable, when the ascertained habits of that species of fish which is most closely allied to the salmon are held in view—I mean the common fresh-water trout. These, the fresh-water trout inhabiting all lakes or ponds fed by streams or even rills of insignificant depth, breed freely; but where there are no such feeders, nor any regular escape of water in their place, they are well known to be incapable of spawning. They require, in fact, to leave their still abodes, and enter the sluices or currents, in order to accomplish this process. It is thus, also, I maintain, with salmon and sea-trout. They are quite as incapable of spawning in the sea as the others are in lakes or even deep pools; and this is shown very forcibly in the strenuous efforts they make, at certain seasons, to ascend our rivers. They will steer their way circumspectly through a labyrinth of stake-nets to the mouth; pushing onward, they will risk the manifold hazards of the seine or long-drag; these escaped, they will glide along, through pool and stream, under terror of new contrivances—the cairn-net, the spear or leister, and angling lures of all descriptions; now they will stem the rapid, now cleave the whirlpool, and, dashing onwards, work up, with exposed fin, along

the shallows. No barrier but they strive to surmount ; even the crashing, thundering, and impracticable waterfall, headed and hemmed in with rocks, is not left untried by these adventurous explorers. And why all this persevering ardour—this scorn of danger ? Surely not for the purpose, as some affirm, of getting rid merely of a few parasitical insects ? Why but, in obedience of their powerful instincts, to accomplish those duties which Nature hath made urgent, in order to maintain and propagate the species ?

These instincts, it is evident, lead the fish in question to push far inland in order to deposit their spawn, and imply, on their part, a dread of salt water, as prejudicial to the hatching of the ova. How can it be otherwise ? Is it on the space betwixt low and high water mark that the ova are presumed to be deposited, alternately left bare and covered over by the retreating and flowing tides—subject, even if carefully buried, to be raked up by the billows, and thrown resistlessly upon the beach, deprived of the protection of the parent fish, and exposed to hazards of a hundred descriptions ? The idea is quite irrational. Is it, then, beyond tide-reach, in water comparatively deep ? Even in rivers, salmon, while spawning, resort to the shoals, instinctively by doing so courting for their deposit the action of solar heat, in order to vivify and hatch it ; and it is plain, from the size and nature of the pellets, compared with those of other marine fishes, such as cod, &c., that they require this action.

That salmon do not, as alleged by some, breed in salt water, may also be inferred from the circumstance that they are seldom or never met with on those coasts where the breeding streams are not of sufficient size to admit of their ascent. Along the shores of Great Britain and the sister island, where there are so many contiguous streams and firths, it may be difficult to adduce a single instance in illustration of this fact. I have ascertained, however, that around the Shetland Islands, where there are numbers of small streams sufficient in run to favour the breeding of sea-trout, these fish are proportionably abundant ; but that the true *salar*, which the rivulets referred to are unable to accommodate, is not known in their vicinity.

SIZE OF SALMON.—I shall conclude what I have here to say upon the salmon, by adducing one or two facts relative

to the size which this fish occasionally arrives at on our British coasts, coupled with a few remarks as to its power of surmounting cascades, &c.

The largest salmon on record is perhaps that made mention of by Mr Yarrell as in the possession of Mr Groves of Bond Street in 1821. It had attained the extraordinary weight of eighty-three pounds. That this specimen, however, was a native of our British rivers, I have not ascertained. I think it probable that it was a Continental fish, of Dutch or Norwegian origin. Pennant states that he has heard of a salmon seventy-four pounds in weight. Mr Lascelles, in his "Letters on Sporting," refers to one caught with the fly in Scotland, weighing fifty-four and a half pounds. A still larger fish, sixty pounds in weight, was captured in the Wye by J. Evans, Esq., and presented to the Duke of Beaufort. Of late years, the largest of our British salmon secured by means of the rod and fly, was taken 6th of November 1849, on the Tweed opposite Kelso, at a cast called the Putt, by — Prescott, Esq. It weighed thirty-six pounds, and was, I am informed by the fisherman Walter Stevenson, a well-conditioned and beautifully built fish. At the Landstell station, Tweedmouth, a salmon weighing forty-three and a half pounds was captured by the net in 1850. Two or three of still greater size have since been captured both on Tweed and Tay. Fish ranging from twenty to thirty pounds are not uncommon, but the lower figure mentioned is still much above the average; indeed, except in the Tay and Forth, the majority of Scotch salmon—I do not speak of grilse—are under a stone in weight.

What is designated by fishermen, in some localities, the "grey schule," is the largest and most compactly built order of the *salar* or salmon proper. The fish so called ascend, for the purpose of spawning, late in the year, seldom before the last week of October, and continue leaving the sea as stragglers until February. They are evidently, from their make, fish of greater age than the general run of salmon, varying from these, in the same proportion, in respect to external appearance, as *they* do from the grilse.

In its grilse stage, the salmon has been known to attain the weight of sixteen pounds. I have frequently seen



grilse taken in Tweed weighing eleven or twelve pounds. The minimum weight of the fish, in its grilse stage, is as low as half a pound; that of the matured salmon less than three pounds. I have taken them several times of these respective weights—and that on their ascent, not as kelts.

The power of the salmon, in surmounting cascades and waterfalls, has frequently been discussed. Mr Yarrell states that its highest leaps are from eight to ten feet. At the falls of Rogie, on the Blackwater in Ross-shire, as well at the Shin falls and those of the Kirkaig, I have had frequent opportunities of observing this fish attempting to overcome a high natural barrier; and my impression is, that Mr Y. slightly underrates its maximum power. The falls first mentioned, at the part where the salmon generally endeavour to ascend, are divided by an intermediate pool or cauldron into two portions, the lower of which appears easily scrambled up when the river is at all swollen, but the upper one is perpendicular, and requires to be sprung over at once. Their leap before surmounting this latter obstruction, I am inclined to think, requires to exceed twelve feet.

In ascending cauld dykes and falls not exceeding four feet in height, salmon, unless under peculiar circumstances, seldom emerge from the water, but steer their course upward, as if the headlong nature of the current presented little or no resistance. When the overshoot, however, is shallow or broken, and discharges itself into a pool or gully of considerable depth, affording facilities for the fish to take its spring, it generally does so.

The upper falls at Kilmorack, on the Beauley, are said to be twelve feet in height, and those of Tummel eighteen feet. The former, as is well known, are frequently surmounted by salmon; and, above the latter, this fish has been captured oftener than once. To meet with its fry, in the spring season, above Loch Tummel, is a matter of common occurrence. In 1847, a fine salmon was taken, by means of the rod, in the loch itself, several miles above the falls I have alluded to.

## CHAPTER X.

## SEA-TROUT.

UNDER the general term sea-trout, are included the *salmo eriox*, or bull-trout; the *salmo trutta*, or salmon-trout; and the *salmo albus*, a designation given by Dr Fleming to the Finnock or Herling. The *salmo eriox*, or bull-trout, is a fish well known to Tweed anglers. It attains occasionally a large size. I once saw an individual, taken out of the river Carron, in Ross-shire, which weighed upwards of twenty-four pounds. They have been caught in Tweed a stone weight, and I have frequently, when rod-fishing, killed them weighing eight pounds. They ascend in scanty numbers during the spring and summer seasons, but are then in excellent condition. On the whole, however, they are a coarse fish, when compared with the *salar*, or salmon proper. They want the same richness of taste; and the internal colour of the flesh is much fainter and less inviting. Still there is no fish that I know of which affords, on being hooked, such sport to the angler. In proportion to their size, they are much stronger and more wayward in their movements than the salmon, and test to a greater extent the sufficiency of the tackle. Although, as I have mentioned, comparatively scanty during the spring and summer seasons, they ascend the river, on the occurrence of a flood, in enormous quantities, at a later period of the year. Betwixt the middle of October, when the net-fishings close, and end of November, I have no doubt that, in ordinary seasons, fully a million of these fish enter Tweed, and push upward to the very sources of its tributaries and their feeders. I have seen them, weighing five or six pounds,

taken by means of the leister, out of insignificant burns close to Moss-paul; I have known them to be captured by the score in the upper portions of the main river, of Lyne, Manor, Gala, Yarrow, Ettrick, and Leader, sometimes in mere threads of water connected with these streams. They frequent the Ale, Kale, and Oxnam running into Teviot. They ascend the Till and Whitadder, wending their way around the bases of Cheviot and into the heart of the Lammermuirs.

During these journeys, which are undertaken for the purpose of spawning, the bull-trout, unlike the salmon, is not content to fast as it proceeds. It is evidently a fish of great voracity, but endowed with strong instincts and perceptions. In the very heat of its progress, it may be enticed readily to the hook by means of salmon-roe employed as a bait, especially on a cold day, and when the water is large and discoloured. Its sense of smell, in common with that of the river-trout and whitling, is so delicate as to occasion the detection of the above-mentioned bait at the distance of many yards, and in a favourable state of water it will seldom refuse it. I have known of as many as twenty fish of this description, weighing on the average three pounds a-piece, having been taken, by means of a single rod, and in the course of a few hours, from Tweed, all of which were on the run upwards, as, on occasions of this sort, is indicated by their coming to the surface every now and then. At the period referred to, although frequently they exhibit an attractive appearance externally, the bull-trout, with few exceptions, are very inferior as food, and contain large quantities of roe. The kipper fish, however, being in a more backward state of maturity, are sometimes presentable enough.

The bull-trout is distinguished from the salmon by the number of *maculæ* on its gill cover—the salmon or grilse seldom exhibiting above one or two spots on that part of the head. It is also more plentifully strewn with spots on the back, shoulders, and upper portion of the flank; the teeth are long and strongly formed; the tail square and expansive; and the scales, which are much smaller in proportion than those of the *salar*, adhere tenaciously to the skin.

Mr Yarrell says that, during its second year, it is termed a whitling in the Tweed. By many fishermen it certainly is so, but quite erroneously. What I have always regarded as a whitling, and what others in common with myself hold as such, differs in many respects from the bull-trout. It agrees, in fact, more with Mr Yarrell's description of the *salmo trutta*. Its tail is forked, its mouth tender and armed with small teeth; the spots on the gill cover are silvered over, or but faintly marked in comparison with those of the *eriox*; the ones on the back, shoulders, and upper portion of the flank are few, and occupy a lighter ground; while the scales, in proportion, are much larger, and less tenacious. The true whitling, which seldom exceeds three pounds in weight, ascends Tweed in June and July—the run of bull-trouts during the above months being comparatively scant. Quantities also make their appearance after the removal of the nets, and I have frequently captured, by means of the salmon-roe, whittings and bull-trout on the same occasion, the former equalling the latter in point of size. There is another distinguishing peculiarity in the whitling, namely, that its flesh is much redder and better flavoured than that of the *eriox*. It occasionally, also, like the latter fish, attains large dimensions, without losing any of its characteristic features, except, as in the case of the grilse on becoming a salmon, the tail acquires more squareness, its central rays lengthening as the fish advances in age.

The finnock or herling is included by Dr Fleming among the different species of sea-trout, under the designation of *salmo albus*. I have been fortunate enough to have had an opportunity of capturing this fish, or one answering in some degree to its description, in various rivers in different parts of Scotland. I have taken it in Ross-shire, in the Conan and the Carron; in Sutherlandshire, in the Laxford, Loch Stack, Inchard, Fleet, Brora, &c. I have caught it over and over again, in the Nairn, the Ness, as well as in the Findhorn. I have also angled for it successfully in the Lochie, and other streams in the Western Highlands; and I have taken it, under another denomination, from Tweed, and the Esk above Langholm, in which two last-mentioned rivers it is severally designated the silver-white, and the

herlin, whiten, or bill—a bill being the term applied to it when in breeding condition.

That the finnock of the north of Scotland is the same fish, at an earlier stage of existence, as the whitling or *salmo trutta*, there can be little question. Every feature in its external appearance assists to prove this; and I am quite satisfied, from what I observed some years ago while residing on the Moray Firth, that such is the case. The habits of the finnock on the Nairn water, near which I lived, disclosed to me, however, one peculiarity which distinguishes it in some measure from the herling or bill of the Dumfriesshire rivers, not certainly from the silver-white of Tweed, which, in the point I allude to, greatly resembles it. It was this, that a large proportion of these fish entered the river and remained there for weeks without spawning, or even discovering any tendency or fitness to do so. In 1837, I caught several of them in good edible condition, as early as the first of February, at a period when the river swarmed with kelts of all descriptions, and continued to take them throughout that month, as well as March and April. They had entered the fresh water, many of them, I have reason to conclude, the previous autumn, and seeing they had done so not as breeding fish, had retained, in a large measure, their condition and edible properties. I may mention, however, that I seldom caught them in this state above three miles from the river's mouth, so that it is possible enough, during the months I refer to, they had ascended direct from the salt water, or kept moving to and fro betwixt it and the river, as tides and floods assisted them. This, however, is mere conjecture, for I am rather inclined to think they had located themselves in the Nairn during the previous season, preferring it as a harbour of shelter in winter to the furious billows of the German Ocean.

The silver-white of Tweed also, which is closely assimilated in external appearance to the finnock, I have captured in good condition during the Spring season, and when the river abounded in kelts. The silver-white is by no means an abundant fish in Tweed, in comparison at least to the finnock in our northern waters. They are more numerous, however, some seasons than others. In

1846 this was particularly the case. They exceeded in numbers that year what I ever recollect them to have been; and I frequently, in the month of October, captured four or five in a forenoon. These were all in good condition, lively on the hook, red-fleshed, and well-flavoured at table.

Early in November, in the same year, I had occasion to pay a visit to a friend in Dumfriesshire, who resided on the Esk, some miles above Langholm, and within a stone-cast of the river. Wishing to test the attractive power of the salmon-roe in that stream, I sallied out one forenoon, rod in hand, to a spot called the Maiden Pool, and had the gratification, in the course of two or three hours, to capture several skellies or chub—one of great size—above two dozen fresh-water trout, and seven or eight bills or foul herlings. Next day, with the salmon-fly, I caught three more of these last-mentioned fish. Of all the bills taken by me, not one weighed half a pound, and without a single exception they were kelted females. Externally, a few of them were black, and of loathsome appearance, but the generality, although lank, large-headed, and loose in the scale, retained their silvery coating. The question naturally occurring to me on the capture of those fish was, Are the bills or herlings of common species with the finnock or silver-white? Here they were, at the same period of the year, in very different condition from the latter. (What the finnock is, in this respect, at the season referred to, I never had a fair opportunity of ascertaining, the close-time of our northern rivers commencing on the 14th of September; but judging from what I have related, as occurring early in Spring, on the Nairn water, I draw the inference that many of this tribe retain their condition during Winter.) On examining them minutely, I descried two distinct varieties, one plentifully spotted on the back, shoulders, and flanks, like the bull-trout; the other, the true herling, having the *maculæ* thinly distributed, the scales silvery and easily separated from the skin, the head small and delicately formed.

Although the bills, on a small scale, may be held to resemble them, the Esk contains no fish answering the description of the Tweed bull-trout; and I make no ques-

tion, judging from this circumstance, that the far-famed bull-trout of Tarras, a tributary of the Esk, were merely bills, and when "ta'en in season," herlings or whitens, the latter being another local name for the same description of fish. This is certain, that Tarras, in the present day, is not resorted to by sea-trout of any magnitude, while its fresh-water breed lays claim to no manner of superiority. The *eriox* or bull-trout proper is not, however, a stranger in the Solway Firth. It ascends Annan, where it is called a round-tail by the fishermen. Mr Yarrell mentions, that it is to this species "that the names of Norway trout and Norway salmon are believed to refer, as used occasionally in Tweed and some of the northern parts of Scotland." I recollect recognising the bull-trout, a few years ago, in Edinburgh, as forming the bulky part of an importation of what were termed kippered Norwegian salmon.

As some have conjectured the bull-trout to be a hybrid, or breed betwixt the salmon and common river-trout, (a supposition which the fact of its possessing the generative power in all its completeness sufficiently disposes of,) I may mention that it is, comparatively speaking, a recent invader of our Border river. The old fishermen affirm that, thirty years ago, it was looked upon as a rare fish; this being the case at a period when both salmon and river-trout were fully as abundant as at present, it requires no further proof in order to set aside the conjecture, as far-fetched and irrational.

## CHAPTER XI.

## SALMON-FLIES.

I RECOLLECT, several years ago, meeting with a well-known landed proprietor in the north of Scotland, and the possessor on both sides of a noted salmon-river, who, being an angler in his own time and way, took it into his head to use no flies in salmon-fishing but such as were made up with materials of a white colour. This he did upon the advice, or in approval of the theory, of a celebrated optician, who affirms that the position of the fish underneath, with regard to a fly traversing the surface, prevents it altogether from distinguishing the colour of the insect, its visual organs in this respect being acted upon by the superincumbent light of day, and so contracted in power as to be able merely to recognise the shape of its prey. That this theory is correct, I am very much inclined to doubt; and so I think would most anglers be, whether on Tweedside or elsewhere. Still, the individual alluded to, notwithstanding his whimsical assortment of flies—one and all, though varying in respect of magnitude, being composed of snow-white dubbing and hackles, silver twist, and portions of the pencilled wing feather taken from the silver pheasant—was no unsuccessful angler; and although occasionally competed with by one of the ablest craftsmen in the district, whose notions regarding the visual perceptions of fish were perfectly different, and who actually took pleasure in using flies of the opposite colour, managed generally to bear off the palm.

Now, independent altogether of the views taken by the gentleman in question, and of the reasons assigned by him



for his capricious usage, I hold this fact to be worthy of some attention,—the more especially as certain deductions from it, which I shall immediately set forth, are fortified by other occurrences in the history of fly-fishing, as singular, and in some respects more inexplicable. These additional facts may be all clumped together in one statement. They consist of the proofs daily recurring in the experience of salmon-fishers, with respect to a fanciful taste as regards flies, naturally possessed by the fish, or inherent in it. A general instance of this develops itself in the well-known circumstance that salmon, in the lower parts of Tweed, are not now to be allured with any degree of readiness by means of the same colours and descriptions of flies as those successfully employed against them twenty or thirty years ago. At that not very distant period, they were wont to be taken only by a limited variety of hooks; on few occasions did the angler venture to experimentalise with any others; he repudiated, above all, those gaudy lures which are now found to be so killing, and looked with strange distrust upon any Irish innovation—concoctions of foreign feathers and highly-stained hackles. Nor, as some of this passing school continue to assert, were the fish themselves a whit less capricious, but shared to a tittle the prejudices and suspicions of the angler, refusing the rich yellow of the golden pheasant, the orange of the toucan, the cærulean of the blue lowrie, the green of the trogon, the crimson of the parroquet, and even those magical fibres which gleam on the much prized tail-feather of the blue and buff macaw.

Salmon were then, like our sage and grey-haired forefathers, of sober tastes and simple habits—content with fare of the homeliest description, and scornful of newfangled delicacies, gilded tit-bits, and savoury provocatives. They esteemed the speckled feather or white tip of some strutting turkey, the dun plume of the gledd or buzzard, select filchings from the maldrake, teal, or widgeon, along with twitches of home-dyed wool, rough barn-fowl hackles, and the threads of an old service-worn epaulette, better than the combined luxuries of Mexico, the Indies, and New Holland.

Thou, silver-headed angler! canst tell of these better and less degenerate days. Thy feats are all registered

within thee, and that lack-lustre eye regains its olden fire when, with hand outstretched, thou recountest the capture of some goodly fish, the sojourner once of yonder pool, whose runs and careerings are to-day as deeply traced on thy memory as if the sward that bears thee were still red and moistened with its blood. Answer me—Where in thy day was the Doctor? where the Parson? where the Butcher? where the Childers?—where, in short, all those prismatic rarities that stock so amply the tin and vellum of a modern salmon-fisher? You possessed them not. It was neither your wish nor your interest to employ them. They were harmful to the salmon in so far only as they alarmed and annoyed it; and if, now and then, in the hands of a stranger, they should chance to draw blood, a dolt of a kelt was at best the only victim.

I am only, reader, stating a well-known fact, when I affirm that, in the time I allude to, the salmon-fishers on Tweedside not only held what is called the Irish fly in absolute ridicule, but actually forbade the use of it on those portions of the river they individually rented; and this they did, not because they deemed it too deadly for everyday use, but solely because they conceived it acted as a kind of bugbear to the fish, scaring them from their accustomed haunts and resting-spots. And, indeed, it is only gradually that, in the lower part of the district I allude to, a complete change has been effected in the matter of flies. Not absolutely discarding the old standard and local lures, modern anglers have introduced into their stock at least a thousand-and-one other varieties, all dignified with the name of killers, yet no single fly-hook resembling any known insect, bird, or other animal. For every season and month, for all hours of the day, for all changes of weather, for waters low, flooded, or in mid state, sunned or clouded, deep or shallow, streamy, wind-ruffled or still, icy-cold or at blood-heat, black or clear, leaf-strewn or otherwise, they have a peculiar and favourite lure: nay, were it possible, by some adaptation of phosphorus, to cause hooks to reveal their trimmings in the dark, no doubt a nocturnal assortment would become added, possessed, as became it, of all the powers of *diablerie* and witchcraft.

I go back to ask, What are the deductions to be drawn from all I have instanced? Was the bygone school of salmon-fishers a humbug? Is the modern one less so? Can the disciples of either unfold anything which was not as well known in the days of Agricola as it is now? Seriously speaking, are the tastes and habits of the salmon, as some assert, of a revolving nature? Is the fish, too, so capricious, that a single fibre wanting in the lure, a misplaced wing, a wrongly assorted hue, will discompose and annoy it? Such questions I leave to be answered by wiser anglers than myself. They search too deeply into the philosophy of the art to obtain their reply from one so imperfectly versed in it; nor does it render the task less arduous were I to comprehend them all under the single query—Can the principle upon which salmon, in certain waters, accommodate themselves to certain colours in the fly, be regulated or explained?

From this dark, insoluble, and thoroughly speculative subject, it is high time to retire. My apology for introducing it at all, rests on the desire I have to discover, to those who make of it a matter of argument, the absurdities they are liable to run into. There is, I cannot help thinking, a great deal of prejudice, self-conceit, and humbug exhibited by salmon-fishers generally, with respect to their flies—a monstrous mass of nonsense hoarded up by the best of them, and opinions held, quite at variance with reason and common sense. I will not go so far as to assert, in relation to salmon-flies, that it would be expedient greatly to reduce their number, or establish, as I have recommended to be done in regard to trout-hooks, any limit to their variety. An innovation of this sort, if proposed, would, I well know, be treated with ridicule. Still, I have reason to believe that the salmon is not quite so finical in its tastes as many anglers represent it to be; that the fastidiousness is more on their part; and that, through carrying it on occasions to an extreme length, they frequently accomplish the very thing they are desirous of avoiding—that is, they alarm instead of alluring the fish. This is exemplified very often on the raising of a grilse or salmon with a particular fly. A great many anglers with whom I am acquainted, make it a practice never immedi-

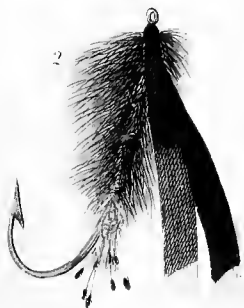
ately to cast over the same fish with the same hook, but, having started and missed their game, at once to substitute another size and description of fly. Now this I hold is all well enough, when a second offer of the lure, due time being granted, has been made and refused; but to present to the eye of the fish, after a few moments occupied in making the change, a hook of different, perhaps opposite colours, must now and then inevitably excite suspicion. As far as my own experience has led me to judge, I generally find that a grilse or salmon, if inclined to rise a second time, is as ready to do so at the fly first offered it, as at any other; nay, I have even, on more occasions than one, raised the same fish, before hooking, four or five times in rapid succession with the same identical lure. Of course, my doing so was more a matter of chance than good guidance; and I should not, on general occasions, were I fishing carefully, have encountered the risk my perseverance was likely to incur of disheartening, if not disgusting, the salmon.

I am of this opinion, however, talking more generally on the subject, that if one only knows how to adapt the size of his hook to the state of the water and season, and is acquainted with two, or at most three, approved-of local flies, he will find it not only quite unnecessary, but positively disadvantageous, to experiment upon the tastes and fancies of the fish with others of a doubtful and untried nature. The only occasions on which he has an excuse for doing this, are when the pools have been well thrashed over before him by resident anglers; nay, even then, he will find it expedient, in selecting a hook, not to deviate very largely from the discovered likings or prejudices of the salmon frequenting this or that locality. He seldom, acting otherwise, can fish with any proper measure of confidence; and that very fact only renders his experiment the more precarious.

I shall now proceed, without further remark, to draw out lists of the most approved Scottish salmon-flies, adapting them severally to their appropriate rivers. I shall also introduce into the proposed classification a limited number of Irish fly-hooks, such as gradually, of late years, have been adopted by our fishermen, and become of common use throughout Scotland.



TWEED FLIES:



WINGS.	BODIES.	SHOULDERS.	TAIL-TUFTS.	SIZES OF HOOKS.	GENERAL REMARKS.
1. White-wing: pure white feather taken from swan or white turkey; six or seven slips are sufficient for each wing.	Dark-blue or black pigs-wool in the upper part, succeeded by claret-coloured ditto; hackle dark, edged with brown, in the upper part, crimson hackle further down, silver tinsel. Same as No. 1.	Light-blue hackle intermixed with mohair of the same colour.	Light yellow.	Adlington.—From No. 15 to 20.  Phillips.—From 4 to 6.	In this spring sizes of salmon hooks, lace and tinsel are preferable to gold and silver twist or thread. Both are sometimes used, the twist above the tinsel, in the same fly.
2. Snipe-wing: small ribbed feather taken from under the wing of the snipe. Another variety from the pen-cilled feather of the silver cock pheasant.		The same, or scarlet hackle and wool.	Ditto, or crimson.		
3. White-top: formed from the rump or tail feather of turkey.	Dark-mohair, claret-coloured, and blue or red near the tail-tuft, black hackle, silver tinsel.	Light-blue or crimson to correspond with the lower extremity of the body. Fine orange hackle.	Yellow or orange.		The name given to this fly and the following one will discover the required feather used for the wing.  A favourite wing in cold weather.
4. Double-white-top: a variety of the same from the rump of the turkey.	Black-mohair in the upper part, relieved below by light blue and yellow ditto; black and fine yellow hackles in succession, silver and gold tinsel.	Light blue hackle or crimson ditto.	Crimson and yellow tuft in juxtaposition, not mixed.		
5. Dun-wing: taken from the salmon-tailed glead or buzzard; also from turkey, Egyptian goose, and mountain pheasant, &c.	Dark-mohair, relieved below by red or deep orange ditto. Black hackle with orange one succeeding it, silver or gold tinsel.	Orange mohair or hackle.	Deep yellow, or orange, or crimson to correspond with shoulder.		The dun white-top esteemed preferable as a wing to the thorough dun. This can be obtained in perfection from the turkey only.
6. Mottled turkey or silver pheasant hen tail. I prefer the white mottled to that having a brownish tinge.	Black or dark-blue mohair in the upper part, wound over with dark fibred hackle, yellow below with orange hackle, silver tinsel.	Orange mohair or hackle.	Deep yellow.		
7. Drake-wing: white mottled feather taken from the breast of the mallard or of the tame drake.	Black wool or mohair body, orange dubbing above tuft, or hackle of the same colour. Black hackle, silver tinsel.	Black hackle, or orange ditto.	Orange or yellow.		A favourite fly when the river is clear.
8. Brown-mallard: brown-mottled ditto taken from the back of the bird. This is more finely marked in the tame drake.	Orange-coloured mohair or pigs-wool, fine brown hackle, gold tinsel.	Dark-blue hackle.	Yellow.		

## TWEED FLIES.—SMALLER SIZES.

WINGS.	BODIES.	SHOULDERS.	TAIL-TUFTS.	OBSERVATIONS.
1. Drake-wing : mottled feather from breast of mallard or teal.	Dark-coloured mohair, blue, purple, or black, in the upper part, twitch of orange ditto, below ; black hackle, silver tinsel or twist.	Twitch of orange or crimson, occasionally introduced under the wing.	Yellow or orange, formed of small feather from breast of parrot, also, floss silk or worsted form a desirable tail-tuft.	In the smaller sizes, the large fibres of the hackle sufficiently in most cases shoulder the fly. A head formed of ostrich herl gives the look a finished appearance. Two or three wrappings are sufficient.
2. White-top : from wing feather of mallard, or rump of turkey.	Black mohair touched off near the extremity with a twitch of blue ditto. Black hackle, silver twist or tinsel.	Blue or crimson do.	Fine crimson or orange feather of the above description. Ditto.	
3. Double white-top : from rump feather of turkey.	Same as above : both may be varied by substituting yellow or orange for the light blue near the extremity.	Ditto.	Ditto.	This is a favourite on the Teith and Forth, also on many of our Scottish streams.
4. Dun-wing : from dun turkey feather. Dun white top preferred.	Dark-coloured mohair, touched off with blue and orange ditto, or olive-coloured throughout ; fine brown hackle, with dark interior, gold tinsel.	Ditto.	A few fibres of golden pleasant tippet feather, or small crest feather from ditto.	The mottled wing used on Tweed and its tributaries is most effective when the river is small and clear ; whereas in the north of Scotland, where it is at all times a favourite, a dark-coloured state of water is no hindrance to its success.
5. Mallard-wing : taken from the brown mottled feather on the back of the mallard.	Dark-blue, green, or orange mohair ; black or brown hackle, gold tinsel or silver.	Light-blue hackle, sometimes wound in.	Same as No. 4. The crest feather used as a tail-tuft is unquestionably enticing. Yellow.	I may observe that the Summer-sizes are most of them adaptations of the Spring-sizes of salmon-hooks employed on Tweed. They differ chiefly in point of finish, and require more choice material.
6. Mottled wing : from the tail of the silver pheasant, hen bird, also from mottled turkey feather.	Dark-blue mohair, touched off with orange, fine dark-brown hackle.			
7. Guinea-fowl wing : taken from finely marked feather of guinea-fowl.	Light-blue mohair, touched off with orange ditto below ; silver tinsel, dark hackle.			
8. Pencilled feather of silver pheasant.	Black or dark blue ; black hackle, silver tinsel.		Yellow or golden pheasant crest feather.	



## SALMON-FLIES FOR THE AWE AND URCHAY RIVERS.—MR. FORREST'S FLIES.

	WINGS.	BODIES.	SHOULDERS.	TAOS AND TAILS.	OBSERVATIONS.
Flies for River Awe.	1. Mottled black and white tail feather from turkey.	Olive-coloured mohair, ribbed with gold twist, black hackle.	Black hackle wrapt close under wing.	Orange wool and small projection of turkey feather.	In clear bright waters this fly is reckoned very deadly. It was first used by Colonel Robertson, a successful salmon-fisher on the Awe and west-coast rivers.
The Black Dragon.	2. Speckled brown feather from mallard.	Blue mohair, ribbed with silver twist. Blue hackle.	Blue hackle.	Golden pheasant crest feather.	
	3. Taken from feather of raven.	Black mohair, black hackle.		Ditto.	
Fly for the Urchay.	Mottled black and white tail feather from turkey.	Dark-blue mohair, touched off with twitch of orange ditto, two turns of light-blue floss and ostrich herl. Black hackle, gold tinsel.	Claret-coloured hackle above twitch of mohair of the same colour.	Golden pheasant crest feather, ostrich herl.	A black ostrich herl is used as a head on this and the four following flies. It is the ordinary heading for flies dressed in the Irish style.
1.	Golden pheasant tail and neck feathers, lustrous, green parrot, and guinea-fowl, mixed together with a little red and blue; with large gold topping over all, and small blue king-fisher feather on each side. Macaw feelers.	One-third deep yellow, next to tag, and remainder black pigs-wool. Black hackle, flat white lace.	Blue feather from Indian kingfisher or jay.	Black ostrich herl, with yellow silk, tipped with silver. Small gold crest feather.	
2.	Same mixture as above, with two jungle-cock feathers in the middle of wing, of sufficient length to expose the white spots.	Dark claret pigs-wool, with hackle of the same colour, and gold lace.	Blue jay.	Black ostrich herl, and light blue silk tipped with silver. Small gold crest feather.	
3.	Same as No 1.	Dark-blue silk, purple hackle, and silver thread.	A dyed blue jay hackle.	Same as No. 1.	Black ostrich herl, deep yellow floss silk, tipped with silver. Gold crest.
4.	Two gold pheasant neck feathers, half the length of wing when tied on with two jungle-cock feathers in the centre, and two or three large gold crests over top. Macaw feelers. King-fisher feathers on each side. Same as No. 1.	Black pigs-wool, black hackle, and white lace.	Jay.	Black ostrich herl, deep yellow floss silk, tipped with silver. Gold crest.	
5.		Dark-yellow pigs-wool, hackle same colour, silver thread.	Purple-dyed hackle.	Small gold crest.	

## SALMON-FLIES FOR VARIOUS RIVERS.

		BODY.	WING.	SHOULDERS.	TAIL TUFTS.	OBSERVATIONS.
Spey Flies.	1.	Black and brown mohair, or pigs-wool mixed; hackle taken from pendant breast feathers of male heron, broad gold or silver lace, lapped on widely.	Brown mottled feather taken from the back of the mallard.		Yellow or orange.	A soft, long-fibred hackle or side feather from barn-fowl cock or hen is sometimes employed instead of heron hackle. A thread of blue silk also is frequently introduced, wound on next the lace. I may mention that, until recently, this, or one similar to it, was held as the only true Spey hook. But the fishers in that quarter have, of late years, greatly augmented their stock, discovering that others of a very different fabric are quite as killing. Indeed, many of those I have introduced into these lists, as favourite lures on Tweed, will be found equally so on most of our Northern rivers.
Nith fly.	2.	Black mohair; black hackle, silver tinsel.	A pair of crest feathers taken from golden pheasant.		Yellow.	
		Light brown wool; peacock herl; red hackle with dark root and edge; tarnished gold twist.	Red turkey with yellow or white tip; under wings of grey turkey, teal, or pea-hen.	Dark brown or black wool.	Yellow.	
Tay fly.		Dark mohair, heron hackle; gold tinsel.	Mottled turkey feather, either brown or white.	A twitch of yellow or orange mohair.	Ditto, or red.	
Dee fly.		Blue mohair, dark brown hackle, silver twist.	Speckled black and white turkey feather; for small sizes of hook employ teal feather.		Ditto.	Wingless hooks, like palmer flies on a large scale, are, I understand, sometimes used on the Dee and Don, by salmon-fishers.
Ness and Beaulley.		Dark, with silver tinsel.	Turkey, peacock, gledit, or mallard feather.			Wings made of peacock herls, considered taking in Beaulley, in snow water.

## SALMON-FLIES—IRISH STYLE AND PATTERN.

	WING.	BODY.	SHOULDERS.	TAIL.	OBSERVATIONS.
The Parson.	A bright yellow hook, wings formed of golden pheasant crests, with slips from the blue and buff macaw.	Yellow floss silk, gold twist.		Golden pheasant crest feather below ostrich herl.	Most of these flies are favourites on the rivers Ness, Beaulley, and Shin, as well as Tweed.
The Doctor.	Mixed wing. Mixtures are generally composed of gold pheasant tippet, ditto tail feather, bustard, brown mallard, capercaillie, &c. &c., along with macaw slips, which latter are reckoned indispensable.	Blue floss silk, silver twist.	Blue feather from wing of jay used as a hackle: the cerulean of the blue lowrie is still more esteemed.	Ditto.	
The Childers.	Mixtures. A pair of golden pheasant crests are also introduced into the wing and the macaw slips as usual.	Yellow body, resolving into orange in the upper part, made roughish, pig's-wool preferable as material, gold thread.	Parmigan feather used as hackle under the wing.	Ditto.	So called after Colonel Childers, a celebrated sportsman and frequenter of Tweedside.
The Butcher.	Mixtures — golden pheasant the most prevalent: macaw slips.	Blue and red floss, silver twist.	Black hackle.	Ditto.	A killing fly on the Shin, the Naver, and the Laxford.
Dundas fly.	Mixed wing, slips.	Greenish yellow body.	Golden plover feather used as hackle.	Ditto.	Designated after John Dundas, Esq., of Edinburgh, a well-known and successful angler.
The General.	Composed of golden pheasant crests as in the Parson.	Blue floss silk.		Ditto.	

## CHAPTER XII.

## ON SALMON-FISHING WITH THE FLY.

ALLOWING to the recreations of fox-hunting and deer-stalking all they lay claim to as manly and exciting pastimes, I cannot help preferring to either of them, indeed to any of our national amusements whatsoever, the noble sport of salmon-fishing. The others, it is true, have their moments and intervals of extreme, it may be thrilling pleasure; even their blanks and disasters scarcely, on some occasions, deserve the name of disappointments or calamities. But there is wanting that indescribable something which gives its zest to the sport I am treating of, rendering its pursuit throughout more equably delightful, and yet offering no hindrance to higher and intenser occasions of enjoyment, created, for instance, by the play and capture of some vigorous and magnificent fish.

When I speak thus, however, of salmon-fishing with the rod, I am inclined to exclude from a large share in my panegyric, the system on which it has hitherto been conducted, under that name, on certain portions of Tweed. To those who live at a distance from this river, the feats of its frequenters, as they are from time to time recorded, appear, no doubt, highly creditable to the parties engaged. To the spectators of them, they are, in many instances, next thing to farcical, quite undeserving the name and character of feats of skill; and, in reality, no more the achievements of those professing to execute them, than Punch and Judy is the veritable unassisted performance of a set of wooden puppets.

Much of the detriment to the sport, and unduc exulta-

tion of the mere novice in angling, in the parts of Tweed I allude to, arises, no doubt, from the nature of the casts or pools, and the necessity of fishing them from a boat, under the guidance of the local fisherman. The aid of an experienced hand is thereby called into operation—one intimately acquainted with the haunts of the fish, and able to judge, from the state of the river, how, and with what flies or lures, it ought to be traversed. To this auxiliary, it is impossible to refuse a large share of the credit for skill and craft claimed by the rodsman who intrust themselves implicitly to his directions. He is, in fact, the mainspring of their amusement, by the assistance of whom the veriest bungler, beyond whose capacity it lies to capture a single trout, may, on the first essay, hook, play, and haul to shore, half a score of salmon. Instances of this sort, indeed, are far from being rare on Tweedside. I could, did I choose to do so, enumerate many of them; but it will suffice to show to what extent the success of the salmon-slayer from a boat depends upon his companion, when I mention that two of the largest fish taken by the rod in Tweed, within these few years, were respectively hooked and brought to bank by boys under ten years of age. Still, the employment of the boat, and the assistance afforded by its rower, although they facilitate greatly the captures effected by the angler, and detract from their merit, as performances requiring skill, observation, and self-reliance, are, after all, necessary drawbacks to the pleasure of salmon-fishing on the lower parts of the Tweed. By some anglers, indeed, they are not considered to take away from its attractions, and are looked upon as a relief, if not a contribution, to the amusement. What I reprehend, however, in the system alluded to, has its root in the provisions of the Tweed Fishery Act, which admits of the killing of kelts and baggits, fish which have newly spawned, or are on the eve of spawning, indiscriminately with clean salmon. This indulgence, which is not granted in the general act applicable to our northern rivers, has always been largely taken advantage of, as regards our Border stream. It is, I allow, difficult to separate the capture of these fish, in Tweed, from that of the clean salmon, during the spring months. This is the only apology which those who vindi-

cate the taking of kelts and foul fish are justified in offering; and I feel surprised that the genuine lover of sport should think it consistent with his pretensions to resort to any other. Apart from the question of injury done to the salmon-fishings, by the destruction of spawned fish, I would ask, Is the capture of such, with the rod, to be placed on anything like a footing with the capture of those which are well-conditioned? Are the same feelings excited, the same degree of satisfaction and amount of triumph experienced, by the slaughter of a dozen lank and hungry kelts, that enliven the angler who has just mastered a prime newly-run salmon? On the contrary, are not the sensations of the kelt-slayer, on occasions of great success, akin to those of satiety and disgust? The appearance of the fish, when caught, and the consciousness that they are totally unfit as food for human use—retaining neither the internal curdiness, nor rich taste of properly conditioned salmon—are quite sufficient, of themselves, to induce such sensations. Nor has the play generally afforded by the kelt much of an exciting character. It consists, no doubt, in the case of a heavy fish, of long sullen pushes, but is seldom varied, like that of the grilse or clean salmon, by the introduction of lively evolutions. Its motions, in fact, more resemble those of a log of wood, swayed by the wind and current, than of an animate creature combating for its life and liberty.

For my own part, I would rather capture in spring a single newly-run salmon than a whole boat-load of kelts. Yet these, and no others, are the fish frequently boasted of, as affording, under the name of salmon, amusement to some pet of fortune—some adept by purchase, not skill, in the art of angling. For, let me ask what all the science displayed by this sort of salmon-slayer consists of? Is he versed in the mysteries of rod and tackle, taught by experience what fly to select, when, where, or how to fish? Is this amount of knowledge at all necessary? Nothing of the kind. The performer has no will or say in the matter. In every act, in the choice of his fly and casting-line, in the position and management of the boat, he is under control of the tacksman. By *him* he is directed where to heave his hook, and, if a novice, how. Nothing is left to

his own fancy or discretion. He has forfeited all freedom of action. Nay, more, he is fettered with the presence of his griping task-master. Enough it is that he pays, and that handsomely, for the sport, so termed, of hauling within reach of the gaff-hook a miserable kelt or two, which, when secured, he sees no more of, and is unable, unless by purchasing it, to exhibit to his friends as a trophy of his prowess—enough, methinks, this measure of endurance, without adding to it the annoyance in question.

Angling and butchering fish I consider as two totally different occupations. The true angler I would describe to be one who follows the art as a science, who cultivates it, not by usurping the experience of others, not by becoming the mere slave to precept, but by fond and zealous assiduity in the practice of its various departments, by carefully studying the habits of the fish he wishes to capture—their food and feeding hours—their customary and occasional haunts—the effects of different states of weather or sizes and colours of water upon their tastes—together with a hundred other matters essential to be known, before he can venture to claim for himself the reputation of an adept in the craft. I do not say he is to refuse the instructions of others; far from it. These he should receive and treasure up with due gratitude; but let him do so only after they have been weighed and examined—when the occasion and benefit of them are ascertained and understood.

That salmon-fishing, as practised from the boat on Tweed, is upon the whole a very agreeable recreation, affording exercise and some measure of joyous excitement to the person engaged in it, I do not mean to deny; but it is not, to my mind, nearly so pleasurable or satisfactory a sport as when pursued on foot. Give me a stream which I can readily command, either from the bank or by means of wading—a dark, hill-fed water, like the Shin or the Findhorn, full of breaks, runs, pools, and gorges—give me the waving birch-wood, the cliff and ivied scaur, tenanted by keen-eyed kestrel or wary falcon—more than this, give me solitude, or the companionship, not less relishable, of some ardent and kindred spirit, the sharer of my thoughts and felicity—give me, in such a place, and along with such

an on-looker, the real sport of salmon-fishing—the rush of some veteran water-monarch, or the gambol and caracol of a plump new-run grilse, and talk no more of that monotonous and spiritless semblance of the pastime which is followed by the affluent, among the dubs and dams of our Border river. The two modes of angling, with their attendant circumstances of place and companionship, are not for a moment to be compared. They, in fact, no more resemble each other than does the stroll of the sportsman through a preserved park, under guidance of the keeper or his assistant, to whom every brood, covey, and form is as well known as are the denizens of the dog-kennel themselves. They differ as widely as does this strait-jacketed method of cramming a game-bag differ from the free march along moorland and hill-side, through heather and fern, over a domain well plenished but not wedged with birds, where you are at liberty to follow or keep in check your highly-trained setter, and, without taunt or ridicule, can miss with either or both barrels some prodigy of a black-cock, or a hare which in size, and length of ear, resembles some veritable donkey.

I shall now proceed to give shape and arrangement to such instructions and matters of knowledge, in relation to the subject of this chapter, as I think will prove of advantage to some of my readers. And first of all, as to the places or portions of a salmon-water frequented by the fish, and where, in the common phrase, they are most likely to take the hook. This is a question I have already, to some extent, treated of in my observations upon rivers, but it is one that lays claim, in the present chapter, to more ample notice.

In all rivers there are certain pools, and portions of pool or stream, to which salmon naturally resort, and, under ordinary circumstances, are inclined to favour the angler. Nor are these always to be discovered by the eye even of the most experienced and able fisher on a water to which he is a perfect stranger. It is only through actually testing or having them pointed out to him by some resident angler, that he can acquire an intimate knowledge with respect to the different casts; whereas, in the case of a purely trout stream, his own practised



eye is sufficient to direct him where to throw, and will detect at once, without fail, the likeliest feeding-grounds and places of resort.

As a general rule applicable to salmon-streams, the fish, on the subsiding of the flood or swell, which forces them either from the sea itself, or higher up the river, take refuge, in their healthy state, among rocks or large stones, both of which are to be found in marked abundance in all well-reputed salmon-rivers. It is not, however, every rock or large stone that the salmon will choose to frequent; nor does the seeming convenience of this or that place of shelter always prove attractive to it. As in respect to its food, so in respect to its accommodation, the fish is royally fastidious, passing over, on occasions, what seems, in point of structure, to be adapted for its concealment and habits, and selecting instead what to our fancy is less in unison with them. Thus, for instance, in a long stretch of water, to all appearance the most inviting, being full of breaks and gorges, walled with rocks and teeming with places of retreat and security, have I failed, times without number, to stir a single fin; while at its neck, where the river widens up, and at which the only appearance of shelter is a dimly-discernible slab of stone, half-imbedded among gravel, I scarcely ever heave a fly without doing execution. Nor do I state this circumstance as a solitary one, seeing I could point out on various rivers many such positions, taken up and held in retention by salmon, apparently out of sheer caprice, but no doubt from some reason which their natural instinct leads them to have respect to. What this reason is I shall not stay to inquire. It may stand connected with the accommodation or shelter, the feeding, the facility of removal in case of a sudden flood, the sensation of the fish, its state of pregnancy, or all or several of these matters combined; but be this as it may, to trace out the exact motives which direct salmon to particular spots in preference to others, apparently as advantageous, is a task not to be ventured upon with materials purely speculative. As I have said, I could point out many such spots, even in large broad waters like the Tweed, near Kelso; as the Red Stane

below Makerston ; the Prison Rock, at Sprouston Dub, &c. &c., each of which is, as it were, a magnet for the attraction of salmon ; so much so, that it has been proved in regard to them, that should one of the occupant fish happen to be abstracted by the angler, its place will, even when the river is at its average height, become, in the course of two or three hours, supplied by another.

Having thus briefly described the likeliest resorts of the fish in a salmon-river, and alluded to their caprice in selecting this or the other point of shelter in preference to one seemingly as accommodating, I am brought to treat of what is more pertinent to the matter in hand, namely, the question, how ought salmon to be angled for ?

I shall, first of all, set forth a few instructions as to the best method of capturing this fish with the fly, and then proceed to explain how it may be taken, most readily, by means of the worm, minnow, or parr-tail. As I have already, in former chapters, described the tackle generally used by the salmon-fisher, it is quite unnecessary for me to make any further mention of it at present. Let me urge, however, upon the angler a single advice in regard to it. On no occasion, while fitting it to his rod, should he neglect examining into its sufficiency. Every knot, strand, and length of the entire casting-line ought to be separately scrutinised, and, to a due extent, tested. The fly-hooks, also, which are intended to be made use of, require close investigation. It may happen, for instance, that the barb is deranged or broken, the hackle loose, the eye or neck of gut fretted and weakened. There may, in fact, be half a score of matters connected with the fly-hook that need to be looked into, nor is the requisite investigation accompanied with much trouble or loss of time : at any rate, what trouble it costs or time it involves is made up for by the measure of risk avoided, and the confidence acquired.

**THE CASTING OF THE LINE.**—In fly-fishing for salmon, the casting of the line is generally managed, first of all, by raising the rod back over the left shoulder. This part of the operation requires to be done slowly and deliberately, with a slight increase of speed or force on the part of the performer as he proceeds. He will thus, if manag-

ing properly, raise the dipping or employed portion of the line above and behind him, so that, by further elevating the rod and bringing it round over his head, both hands being employed in the exertion, he shall cause the tackle in question to describe, as it were, a sort of semicircle or horse-shoe figure in the air. He must then, at the moment when the sweep in question is completed, and the rod has attained its highest elevation, direct his fly forward, by a rapid impulse, towards the spot where he wishes it to alight; and this should be done without any accompanying jerk or violent movement, but solely by a firm continued exertion of strength, as in the "putting" or launching of a large stone or cannon ball.

This is the left-shoulder method of throwing the salmon-line, and is commendable, not so much on account of its being more easily managed than the other, but chiefly because of the advantage it gives the angler when under a bank or in advance of shrubby ground, where his hook, were it suffered to fly back, instead of being kept aloof, over his head, would frequently find its anchorage behind, and thus endanger the safety of rod and tackle, as well as try the patience of the thrower. But there is no reason why, under favourable circumstances, right-shoulder or back casting should not be resorted to. I think, for my own part, that the fly hove from the right shoulder generally alights on the stream surface with greater lightness, and can be directed with more accuracy towards the desired spot. The sweep or circle is, in this case, described over the arm or shoulder, and not over the head as in the other mode of throwing. The fly, consequently, during its performance, is held more aback, and occupies a less elevated range. On this account it is extremely apt, should the angler prove too liberal of his line, to come into contact, as already mentioned, with the bank behind him.

I have frequently heard salmon-fishers argue upon the matter of distance to which a fly may be hove, one boasting that he can discharge so many yards of line; another that he can master a still greater surface of water; and a third, who ridicules the exploits of both, asseverating that he can lay his fly with dexterous precision across the broadest

stream in Scotland. Does it never, I ask, occur to those who make the casting of some twenty or thirty fathoms a matter of moonshine, to inquire what of actual power the lever they employ possesses, which enables them, as they fancy, to lift or recover such an extraordinary outlay of line? Giving even the advantage of a rod twenty feet in length, and allowing moreover that its wielder is fully six feet in height, with a proportionate extent of arm, and that he stands elevated above the surface of the stream not less than a foot, I maintain it to be impossible for him, apart from the assistance which a favourable breeze may happen to supply, to lift in or recover, so as to effect a second discharge, more line than will measure four times the length of his salmon-rod: I do not of course include what is confined within the rings of that implement.

In fact, without adopting the heaving or pitching system practised on Thames and other English rivers—a mode of throwing not adapted to fly-fishing—it is impossible for the angler to command a range of cast exceeding thirty-five yards from the spot whence he plies his hook. It is, I admit, quite practicable for him, in the act of throwing, to let out a yard, or even two, of line more than he is able to lift or recover; but, by doing so, he only imposes upon himself the necessity of taking it in again, either with his hand or by means of the reel, before repeating his cast.

I might readily, were I so inclined, dilate upon this subject with more order and ceremony, but I have no wish to treat of it in a plenary or philosophical manner, by disquisition or diagram, as if it merited the special attention of the angler. All I desire to be observed is—and the fact bears its own explanation among the axioms of mechanical law—that the length of the lever or lifting power comprised in the rod and its wielder, regulates to all intents and purposes the distance to which the fly can be hove. The action of the arm and muscles, the weight of the line, the make and pliancy of the rod, and the propelling or repelling virtue of the air when in motion, its resistance, and many other causes, act, there is no doubt, to the advantage or prejudice of the cast taken; but the lever power, when used as a power of recovery, is affected by them to an extent easily calculated on; and, on the

whole, they can only act as very subservient aids or drawbacks to the exercise of that power.

**THE WORKING OF THE LINE AND FLY.**—In what are properly called pools—that is, the terminations of streams, or sluggish water that can only be fished over with effect when rippled by wind—it is generally expedient to direct the fly across, almost at right angles with the bank, and allow it to sweep or sail round, so as to catch the current and bring the line to its full natural tension. To do this invitingly, the angler must ply his rod, gradually lowering it as the fly beats round, until the point has declined to within two or three feet of the water's surface. The plying motion consists of a measured and gentle working of the line, so as to impart a life-like appearance to the lure, causing it, as it were, to amble and sport leisurely in the stream, opening and shutting its wings, and giving opportunity to the fish to pursue and seize it. This motion also assists to keep the line in sufficient stretch, and to disguise all the unattractive, exposed, and suspicious points of the fly and tackle.

In fishing streams, (I use the word as one differing in signification from pools, and referring to those portions of a river which are of rapid movement,) the line, instead of being directed across at right angles with the bank, ought to be thrown more in accommodation with the run of the current, say at an angle of  $45^{\circ}$ , so that the fly, in describing its sweep or curve, may not come round too rapidly and escape the notice of the fish. In rapid water, such as the necks of streams, straits, and eddies, the plying and working of the hook is not always requisite; at any rate, one should have resort to it as a secondary measure, allowing every chance to be given to the fish rising, at the juncture which takes place on the completion of the curve, or what is termed the moment of hing. This failing, the salmon-fisher advisedly may finish off his cast with the process in question, which, if it do not prove irresistibly attractive to a pursuing fish, may be the means of stirring up to the scratch one hitherto dormant.

Those parts of a stream or pool, which are known to afford favourite shelter to salmon, cannot be angled over with too much care. A single cast or two will, in most

instances, be sufficient to determine the presence or humour of a fish, in places where the shelter is limited, or, it may be, doubtful, such as a single stone or projection of crag ; but with a range of water underwrought with rocks and retreats, the angler should deal prudently and circumspectly. A cover of this sort it will not answer to beat in quick, slovenly style, forwarding one's-self within ken and survey of the game, as some do, who, from their eagerness to be *in medias res*, plunge waist-deep into the primest portions of the stream, scaring right and left the liers in wait, whose plunges in the distance are mistaken for sober, matter-of-course movements, indicative not of alarm and excitement, but of readiness to favour the adventurous and impatient rodsman.

It is here, on such a range of water, that the salmon-fisher should exercise caution and employ method. He ought to work progressively and with deliberation, commencing above the extreme head or foot of the range in question, and compassing the whole, I do not say inch by inch, but in such a manner that no opportunity shall be given for any one fish to avoid seeing the fly. He should also beware, if possible, of disturbing the water already experimented on, as, by doing so, he not only destroys the charm of a yet untried hook, but, in frequent instances, so alarms the fish as to cause them immediately to shift their quarters. Sometimes, also, when thus disturbed by the approach of one's person too near their haunts, they will grow sullen and suspicious ; and this effect is not always readily worn off, but will continue influencing them for days to come.

How far off a salmon can discern the transit of a fly from its retreat, it is not easy to ascertain ; and it would require a good deal of particularising to take away from the general nature of the question. This, however, is well known, that fish lying in a depth of water exceeding ten or twelve feet seldom, if ever, rise at the artificial fly. It is true there are many gullies, both in Tweed and other rivers, of nearly twice the depth above specified, where salmon are known to rise freely, but such fish are not at the bottom. They rest merely on the craggy sides and ledges which wall in the water. In some localities, they

hold their look-out from a sunken fortalice of rock, the fissures of which afford them ample and secure accommodation.

That a fly-hook, say of the largest spring size, may catch the observation of salmon at a still greater depth than twelve feet is possible enough ; but it is quite true that, if so, it loses all attractive effect, and a fish would as soon think of leaping at the moon as bestir itself for a mouthful so remote. So much as to sheer depth of water, when considered as distance betwixt the salmon and the fly ; but let me take the case of a fish lying in a shallow break. How far off, in this instance, would the hook operate as a lure ? For my own part, I think it would require to pass within four or five feet of the spot where the salmon holds watch ; and I am led to think so, in some measure, from experiments made, at the end of July 1845, at Coldstream bridge, where, during the grilse season, in a fine water, there is every opportunity for one stationed above to observe the natural powers and instincts of the fish, both as regards the matter in question, and in respect to their likings and aversions manifested towards the colours and sizes of artificial flies.

Salmon, be it noted, are a duller fish, by many degrees, than common river-trout, and by no means so sharp-eyed as bull-trout and whitlings. These frequently take the hook well in waters considerably discoloured, and refuse it when the streams have resumed their ordinary size and transparency. It is otherwise with salmon, whose visual organs are generally, under such circumstances, unable to detect the transit of the fly over currents comparatively shallow ; nor will they attempt to seize it or look out for prey until the flood or fresh has very much subsided, and the floating particles of opaque matter, resulting from the disturbance, are entirely at rest. But although I have every reason to believe that the salmon is not quite such a quick or sharp-sighted fish as some give it the credit of being, and that, even in the clearest water, it is unable to detect the passing of the fly at a depth and distance from its retreat exceeding twelve feet, yet should the lure employed hit its fancy, it will, if inconvenient to attempt seizing it, owing to the rapidity of the current or other cause, follow the

hook round over a space of many yards, until a position and diminished rate of speed have been acquired by the latter, which either encourage the endeavour to take hold of it, or lead to the detection of its nature as a guile or artifice. This, however, is a mode of procedure on the part of the fish by no means invariable ; for salmon will often make for the fly the moment it is perceived—nay, in some instances, the instant it alights on the surface ; besides, there are many casts or salmon-throws which do not admit of travelling the hook at all, such as the narrow heads and hings which frequently preface deep, ragged water, also confined places, formed by break-waters and cairns, &c. &c. Into water of this description the fly should be heaved with care and lightness, so as not to alarm the fish. As to its primary movements, allow the current in some measure to control them, but do not give it the full sway. Always recover the hook upwards or towards yourself after allowing it to drop, and do this by gentle impulses, not urging it into a gallop or hasty pace, but guiding it at an amble, so as to appear more life-like and natural, whether taken as an insect or as a small fish.

In salmon-fishing, never allow the hook itself to plough or ruffle the surface of the water. By the trout-fisher, whose lures are, in point of size, comparatively insignificant, this may be done occasionally without any bad result ; but a salmon-fly thus worked will generally occasion distrust or terror, and seldom prove inviting. On the other hand, however expedient it is to keep the fly well sunk while travelling it, one must avoid falling into the error of allowing it to sink too far. It is into this extreme that many of our best salmon-fishers are apt to run. They employ frequently, when there is no occasion for it, too much throwing line, and at the same time, while working it, lower the point of the rod beyond all due proportion. Consequently they are often obliged to gallop in order to sustain the fly ; and should a fish incline to take it, in two cases out of three they are left without any indication of its attempt : nay more, in the event even of a marked and well-directed rise, where the presence of the fish could not fail of being detected, a very long line is incapable, from its want of sufficient pressure, to insure the planting or



fixing of the barb in the mouth of the salmon. It acts as too distant and too loose a method of communication betwixt the angler and his spoil. It makes it necessary for him to attempt hooking the fish by striking—a mode of operation, in respect to salmon, which is certainly reprehensible. In the case, however, of a strong current, or when the angler is highly elevated above the water, as on a bridge or rock, the employment of a long travelling line is quite expedient, and in no respect falls within compass of the objections above stated.

RECOMMENDATIONS HOW TO ACT ON RAISING A FISH.—When fly-fishing for salmon, the angler requires to have a general notion of where his hook is, and how it traverses the stream or pool; but this is all. To watch it minutely is not necessary. By doing so, the eye is frequently brought into inopportune contact with the fish itself when rising. It detects its presence before the salmon has seized the fly, and, as a natural consequence, the rodsman, in the surprise or flutter of the moment, is very apt either to draw away his hook by a sudden or violent jerk, or else to check its progress for the moment, and allow opportunity for the fish to discover the deception. In trout-fishing with the fly, we can scarcely, in the event of a break on the surface, strike too rapidly. It is different in salmon-fishing. Here, one should not alter the motion of the hook until he is actually made sensible of the presence of the fish, by feeling his weight on the line; nor even then is there any act of exertion required on the part of the angler, further than the simple raising of his rod, in order to fix the hook. When force is applied, or any motion approaching to a jerk made use of, the chances are, that either the line itself or jaw of the fish gives way: whereas, a line of mere ordinary strength, and the tenderer parts of the mouth, will always sufficiently resist the slight impulse which is required in order to hook salmon. But I need not to say more on this matter, for it will become natural to one practising on a salmon-river, and travelling the fly properly, to strike, as it were, with effect, and also to make the most of such rises, or attempts on the part of the fish to seize the hook, as indicate something faulty in its humour or vision.

All occasional salmon-fishers have, in their experience, met with blank and adverse days ; and of these, the most tantalising happen when the fish are plentiful, when they are inclined, moreover, to look at the hook, to follow it, and even break the surface above or near it without making any real attempt to take hold. What, it will be asked, is to be done by way of remedy on an occasion of this sort ? The practice of experienced anglers has been to change the fly over the fish ; and, indisputably, it is the correct one. It must not, however, be presumed that there is, to meet all circumstances, a great deal of efficacy in this resort, and that one, after experimenting to a certain extent, may hit upon what he chooses to term the killing fly of the day. It generally happens, when fish are in the capricious humour I speak of, (affected possibly by atmospheric causes, often by the state of the water, and as often by the action of solar light,) that they remain so for a considerable time—for the space, at least, of three or four hours, sometimes nearly a whole day. The operation of a change of fly made under such circumstances is almost always limited to an individual fish ; were it otherwise, there could be no reason to complain ; but I doubt much, unless in the event of a change of weather, or state of water, that salmon, having shown a degree of partiality to the three or four flies first used by rising at them, would, on the exhibition of a fifth or sixth, all at once discover towards these a peculiar fondness which induces them, without reserve, not merely to show face, but greedily to take hold. In the case of an individual fish, this is, I allow, possible enough to happen ; but I cannot bring myself to believe in the influence of any particular hook used under such circumstances over the tastes and caprices of the general body.

For my own part, I am commonly content to find out a killing fly in the one which induces fish to rise ; and the reason I have for substituting another, should a salmon merely break the surface without taking hold, is not that I expect the substitute to prove a whit more enticing, but I would do all in my power to prevent the distrust and alarm possibly consequent upon a repeated transit of the identical lure. This distrust, however, be it noted, is only a possible event as regards the fly-hook in question ; and

the substitution of another, so far from acting as a counter-charm, may, on the contrary, operate strongly to my prejudice, occasioning or confirming the very alarm I am endeavouring to suppress.

The expediency, therefore, of changing the fly immediately, over a grilse or salmon, on the failure of its attempt to take hold, is very questionable ; nor, although occasionally acting on it, am I a slave to the practice. If led to believe that the fish has missed his aim, less from shyness than over-keenness, or it may be owing to the inconvenience of place and position, the rapid nature of the current, improper management of the line, or other such cause, most assuredly I would not change the fly over him until convinced that he had no inclination to rise a second time : even then I should be chary of bestowing a new hook without allowing him an interval of rest not shorter than a quarter of an hour. In passing, however, the first fly over him a second time, I would use little or no delay. The humour he is in for rising at it has already been tested, and there is some possibility of its subsiding, should the opportunity be given. If convinced, however, that the fish started came towards the hook in a dubious, distrustful mood, I would then allow him a reasonable respite of some minutes, and, at the same time, substitute a fly-hook of smaller dimensions—I do not say less gaudy in appearance, but rather the contrary ; for it is well known, in respect to Scottish rivers, that the Irish fly, with all its glitter, is often most killing under a clear sky, and on low limpid water ; while the Scotch one, sober in hue, develops its attractive powers in dull windy weather, and not unfrequently when the streams are of a deep porter colour, the delight of the trout-fisher's eye. This refused, I would experiment, according to the state of the river, with a larger one ; and finally, as a last resort, recur to the hook first employed.

Perhaps all this extreme fuss and trouble about a single fish may be looked upon as unnecessary, if not ridiculous. It is so, I allow, in certain rare positions ; and there are those who, being placed in such, laugh at the idea of bestowing more than mere brachial exertion in the capture of salmon with the rod. Such, having their will and wont

of a well-reputed stream, are less dependent for sport upon the caprice of the fish, and take less care to exhibit craft and science in the securing of them than others, whose range is limited and unprotected. These latter, however, be it understood, form the better salmon-slayers. They may be unable to boast of many captures in proportion, but it is not because they are deficient in skill or practice. What honour is due, as a sportsman, to the ranger of a well-stocked preserve? Is he necessarily a truer shot—keener-eyed—steadier handed—more active—more enduring—abler in the management of his kennel—than one who has to toil over hill and dale, through marsh and stubble, in search of a broken covey or solitary hare? With the former, to miss his bird is a matter of small consequence. He can afford to do so, while the other cannot. He can afford to pass it over altogether—to forgive his dogs a careless point, or a run in. He requires to take no pains, and encounter no fatigue. The game rises at his feet; the bag can be filled at all events. It is different with the latter. He cannot afford the throwing away of a single chance. One act of misconduct on the part of his setter—a too hasty or too dilatory pull of the trigger—an error in the fielding—a miss from over-excitement, or any other cause—the escape of a wounded bird—each of these circumstances by itself tells hard against him, and is frequently an occasion of lament and grievance. Such occurrences, however, produce their advantageous effect, by encouraging the endeavour to avoid them for the future. Being felt as matters of importance, and treated as such, they all act towards making the sportsman. They inculcate prudence, decision, vigilance, the study also of natural history, as far as relates to the habits of his game. They make him careful, frugal, active, and earnest—superior, as respects his occupation, to the slayer of hand-fed pheasants, as is the wild deer in strength and fleetness to the bloated venison of some palace park.

And thus it is with the true angler. He is not made out of thick and manifold, but out of few and scattered resources. The science of his art is acquired in a rigid and exacting school. He has to reconcile himself to disappointments, to practise self-denial, to encounter hardships.

He requires to study devotedly, perseveringly, to neglect or omit nothing. With subdued expectations, he ought never to despond. His motto should be of bright letter—the banner-word of a conqueror.

HOW TO MANAGE A SALMON WHEN HOOKED.—On hooking a fish there remains often much to be done before he is secured. About one-third of hooked salmon escape ; some, through sheer carelessness or want of experience on the part of the angler ; others, by reason of the fish being slightly or insufficiently fastened ; and a few owing to uncontrollable circumstances which occasion, without choice or remedy, the snapping or wearing through of the line. Thus, for instance, a strong fish, on being hooked, may betake itself in a direction down or across the river, while the angler, his stock of line being run out, is, from the nature of the banks, or the breadth of the pool, unable to pursue ; or it may, having its lair among sharp-edged rocks, exert itself with success to wear through the gut which holds it—a manifestation of cunning, on the part of an old fish, by no means uncommon, although it is seldom met with, when the salmon is fresh-run, and relies for escape upon the exertion of its strength and fleetness.

On hooking a fish, the first thing to be done by the angler is to raise his rod to a proper height—to throw the point of it well back over his shoulder, or, in technical language, show the butt to his prisoner. To do this properly, one does not require to use force, or, in the smallest degree, strain his rod ; nor should he, in all cases, act with extreme gentleness, but accommodate his firmness of hold to the strength of his tackle and size of hook employed. At the same time, he should be prepared to allow line, and that freely, in case the fish choose to exert its speed.

It is not always, on hooking a salmon, that the angler can immediately form a just opinion as to its size. Fish, under the control of the rod, often acquire dimensions very different from those which, at first start, were attributed to them, and as frequently they fall short of what is conjectured. It sometimes happens, for instance, that a powerful salmon makes reserve of its strength, and by its movements, passionless and confined, appears, for the space of several minutes, little better than an unresisting inani-

mate mass; nor until irritated by the continued pressure, I say not pain, resulting from the rod and tackle, does it give vent to its fury in grand impetuous bursts, which, as they shake and agitate his rod and line, stir also and agitate the heart of their wielder.

On the other hand, a comparatively small fish will sometimes, on being hooked, exert on the instant an unexpected degree of strength and velocity. It will dart upwards or across the stream with railway speed, and conclude each heat with a succession of somersets, which, although they exhaust rapidly the power of the performer, are severally, as they occur, fraught with danger. In this case the salmon quickly betrays its size, and can be dealt with accordingly; still there is always a necessity for the exercise of extreme caution, for the more volatile in disposition the fish shows itself, the greater are the chances of its escape. When deeply hooked, it is generally unable or unwilling to indulge the eye of the angler with antics of the above description, but will confine its manœuvres to its natural element, merely breaking the surface on emergencies, (on the termination, for instance, of some powerful sally,) and frequently betaking itself to a different mode of action, suited as readily to snap the line or detach the barb from its mouth. The following instructions, as to playing or managing a salmon with the rod, will be found useful.

Always, in running a fish, keep well up to, or, if possible, at right angles with its head. In the event of its taking across the current, instead of stemming or descending it, give the butt without reserve. In the case of a plunge or somerset, slacken line as quickly as possible, but use no delay in recovering it when the danger is over. When fish are plentiful and in humour to take the fly, it is better to risk the loss of an indifferent-sized individual which you happen to have hooked, than to allow a long range of unfished water to become disturbed through its capricious movements. In this case, stint the line and hold on obdurately, but not beyond the presumed strength of your tackle. During the grilse season, there are many portions of water, on Tweed especially, where it would be absolute folly in the angler, were he to humour the fish to

its heart's content. A lively new-run grilse may occasion more alarm among its kind than one is aware of, especially if the water be of the transparent hue it generally bears during the summer or autumnal months. In event, however, of the salmon being few or rising shyly, I would advise that some degree of care and ceremony be taken with what fortune brings to the hook; and that, on such occasions, more regard be paid to the management of the fish under control than to the non-disturbance of a few yards of stream, where the chances of adding to one's success are, at least, extremely doubtful.

In these circumstances, avoid using undue violence. Should the fish escape, the consciousness of your having done so will only add to the disappointment. There is one precaution particularly to be attended to in respect to a newly-run fish—and that is, immediately on hooking it, use a moderate degree of pressure. The salmon will then brave or stem the current, and direct its course upwards; whereas, on tightening the reins, it will frequently do the reverse, and thus not only may a portion of the water in prospect become disturbed, but there is considerable chance, and in some places an absolute certainty, of the fish, if a large one, making its escape.

Baggits and kelts have often a strong inclination to descend, instead of pushing upwards; but little danger, on their doing so, accrues to the line, owing to the nature of the places they frequent, their style of running, and other causes: moreover, the loss in their case is less felt or regretted than when good wholesome fish make off with the tackle.

THE LANDING OF THE FISH.—On Tweedside, a gaff-hook or *cleik* is generally made use of by salmon-fishers, in order to expedite the landing of the fish. I have remarked that, in some parts of Scotland, a small hoop-net is also employed for this purpose. In respect that it is not liable to abuse or injure the appearance of the salmon, the latter implement may be considered the preferable one. The *cleik*, however, is more convenient, and may be resorted to in places and at distances where the hoop-net cannot be made available. The employment of a landing appliance at all—certainly not its advantage—may be con-

sidered, in a sporting view, as questionable. I have heard it insisted on that the angler ought always to play his fish to bank, and secure him entirely by his own management, and with his own hand. To this I do not entirely assent, but I certainly think that there are occasions when the gaff-hook is brought into play quite inopportunately, when, in fact, it acts, along with its wielder, a part in the capture of the fish that can scarcely be esteemed secondary to that engaged in by the rodsman himself.

In expert hands, this implement is unquestionably of great advantage in securing partially-exhausted fish. At the same time, it curtails what many consider a portion of the sport ; and I have seen it put into requisition at a stage altogether premature : the fish, on being hooked, and before its strength was nearly worn out, having waywardly edged in, so as to give the opportunity referred to. I am well aware that there are some salmon-fishers who hold the playing and landing of the fish as very inferior considerations, and who reckon the whole art and amusement to consist in the raising and hooking. With one gentleman I am acquainted, an able and eager sportsman, who, after the first burst, was accustomed to resign the rod into the hands of his attendant, in order to rid himself of what he considered a slavish or supplementary task. To such individuals, the employment of the gaff-hook is a matter of perfect indifference ; but I cannot reconcile myself to their cramped and petted notions on the subject of what forms a most essential constituent of the amusement. The playing and landing of the fish are unquestionably act and part with the raising and hooking, and when separated, all interest on the part of either performer is diminished ; the capture of the fish becomes a disputed matter, achieved betwixt both parties, and claimed accordingly.

In absence of an assistant, the salmon-fisher should always be careful to select the best landing-place within view—one to which he can readily lead his fish when exhausted, and where he has no occasion to exert further strength than he has all along been using, in order to draw it ashore. Gravel banks partly covered with shoal water, flat rocks similarly circumstanced, or any level spot where



the salmon may naturally turn over at once, without power of recovery, on his broad side, are well adapted for the purpose in question. In case of no such convenient landing-place being at hand, I would, rather than risk the loss of a good fish, guide him to some distance down the river, until, in fact, I fall in with a desirable port. Do not, however, be induced to haul a salmon up against the stream, with the view of landing it on some jut of sward, sand, or rock, that engages your fancy at the moment. Should the fish press or incline to be guided towards it, good and well; but on no occasion resort to force, when force may be avoided. The fish being grounded, shorten line to the extreme, and, holding back your rod with one hand, step forward, and with the other grasp the salmon tightly above the tail. A glove or cotton mitten will be found of great service at this juncture. You may then toss or carry it to the bank above, and, by a blow or two on the head, immediately despatch it. In case of your line being too long to permit you to seize the fish without quitting hold of the rod, then do so—only act with rapidity when you approach to make your seizure.

When the fish has been despatched, be careful, on extricating the hook from its jaws, lip, or tongue, that no undue force be applied to the bend or barb, and attend more especially to the wings, hackles, and body-gear, which are liable to be torn through and disfigured. In all cases, when the steel is firmly fixed, use a small knife, in order to free the hook; and, washing it, dress up the feathers before you recommence fishing. After a long run, as every salmon-fisher must have observed, the tackle frequently comes to hand encumbered with numerous twists. These it is common to attribute to the workings and writhings of the fish, under sway of the rod and its wielder; but they proceed, in reality, from the action of the main or winch line, which, when run out, is apt, being in nine cases out of ten over-spun, to untwist itself upon the casting portion of the line, and thus occasion the perplexity I have described. Under such circumstances, the angler ought always to revise his tackle, and ascertain that it has escaped injury.

I would recommend all anglers who are in the habit of

fishing salmon unattended, to carry along with them a short gaff or landing-hook, not exceeding in length of handle two or three feet—such, in fact, as may be slung conveniently from, or placed inside of the pannier. This will be found, on many occasions, greatly to facilitate the securing of a tired fish, and is not intended, as is the ordinary gaff-hook, for striking with, but merely for inserting below the gill-cover of the salmon, and dragging it to the bank.

In the course of the above instructions, I have touched upon most of the points worthy of notice, in connection with the subject of salmon-fishing. To extend further my line of observations, I feel to be more simple than satisfactory. The matter is far from being exhausted, but I doubt much that I could add anything of avail or interest to what I have already stated or set forth. I shall not, therefore, hamper my code of instructions, however faulty or deficient, with any additional advice, or obtrude into a region of facts what is purely theoretical in connection with salmon-fishing. A great deal that might not unappropriately have been placed under this head will be found in the chapter upon Salmon-flies, and in other parts of the volume. By no arrangement of subject that might have been entered upon, could I have avoided distributing through several portions of the work what professed to belong entirely to one; nor, indeed, apart from this restraint, could I wish, for the mere sake of isolating or giving separate distinctness to the different parts, to break in upon the connection that naturally exists betwixt them.

Considering, therefore, the entirety of the work as more essential than the entirety of each of its parts, I make no apology for what may be reckoned a loose and scattered treatment of this or that subject; the more especially, as I am shut up, without remedy, to the course before me. A reference then, as at present, from this to that chapter, being an interference with the subject-matter of either, must be held as showing the connection or intimacy already spoken of, and without which the entirety of the volume could not exist. I now proceed, in a separate chapter, to treat of Salmon-fishing as practised with the Parr-tail, Minnow, and Worm.

## CHAPTER XIII.

## SALMON-FISHING WITH THE PARR-TAIL, MINNOW, AND WORM.

IN Chapter VII., I have described, at some length, the parr-tail tackle, the way in which the bait or lure ought to be cut, how attached to the hooks, &c. &c. My observations upon these matters, although made in reference to trout-fishing, comprise, when applied to salmon, nearly all that can be said upon the subject. Almost the only additional instructions I can give the angler refer to the weighting of the tackle. In this respect, he requires to be liberal of his leads or plummets ; and in spinning the lure, careful that he keeps it well sunk—in fact, close to the bottom of the pool or stream. Salmon, when at all inclined to take the parr-tail, will do so in water comparatively still, as well as at the head of streams and rapid places. They seldom pay any regard to it when the river is discoloured or beyond its ordinary spring size, although bull-trouts, especially kelted fish of this description, will seize it greedily. It is esteemed by some surest as a bait at the latter end of May ; but a clean fish will take it, as it does the minnow, throughout the spring months.

In very cold weather, during March, and when the water is most uninviting to the eye, having that greenish tinge which indicates the presence of snow at its sources, I have known the parr-tail, in common with the minnow, to be a killing bait. Nay, amid thick slabs of ice, and when the air is so frosty, as in the course of a few minutes to stiffen the wetted line, and render it unfit for work, this bait will be found for the moment, if cast where

salmon are, of almost certain avail. Under circumstances, of course, such as I have last mentioned, there would be much difficulty, after hooking the fish, in securing it, as, unless forcibly dealt with, it would certainly make for shelter under the ice, and in all likelihood cut or wear through the line against its sharp edges.

In fishing with the minnow for salmon, observe the same direction as when fishing with the parr-tail. Play the lure near the bottom, and more leisurely than you would do were river-trout the object in view. Use a minnow of large size, and tackle to correspond. The parr-tail tackle of three hooks may be substituted advantageously for the common minnow-tackle of two. Bright frosty days in March and April are much preferable to dull windy ones, when the minnow is used; and should the streams be clear or in a dwindled state, most salmon-fishers would look forward with certainty to obtaining sport.

In the spinning of the parr-tail and minnow, as it is practised for salmon—that is, with heavy leads and close to the bottom of the cast or lair—there is great danger of the tackle running foul below of rocks and other impediments. Sometimes, in playing, it will become locked in betwixt two stones; sometimes one of the hooks catches against a sunken tree or mass of turf, and in either case the angler finds himself what is termed fast. On such occasions, (and they frequently happen to those even who have an accurate knowledge of the ground they fish over,) the angler having, without success, made every attempt at extrication which ordinarily suggests itself, ought, as a final expedient, to give out line liberally with his hand—say three, four, or five yards beyond what was made use of; he should then cast out from him, as if with fly tackle, in the direction taken immediately before running foul; and finally, this done, recover line quickly. I know of no surer method than this of liberating fast tackle. The experiment, as detailed, may and ought to be repeated at least a dozen times, without despair of success. Indeed, unless the locking of the tackle happened to be an involved or desperate one, I never saw it fail.

I proceed now, having thus briefly disposed of these methods of salmon-slaying—not, however, because they merit small regard, but chiefly, as I have already, in a former chapter, engrossed all that appertains to either subject—I proceed to describe the manner of fishing for salmon with the worm, as practised on Tweedside. I am not aware that in any one of our large northern rivers, the Tay, Dee, Spey, Findhorn, Ness, or Shin, the mode of angling I am about to treat of has been more than very occasionally tried; and I can easily comprehend why such occasional experiments, although made by those instructed in the art at the feet of old Father Tweed himself, have generally proved failures.

On these rivers, to give the experiment full justice, the experimentalist would require not only an accurate knowledge of how he is to conduct the whole process, but he must have besides a most intimate acquaintance with the stream he is angling in, and be able at a glance to ascertain from its size, colour, and temperature in what humour the fish are; for in worm-fishing for salmon there is this peculiarity, that it cannot be indulged in as a common or every-day sport, but is dependent more closely upon circumstances than any other branch of the gentle art I am acquainted with. Thus, to insure success, one must have the water at a certain reduced state to act upon; he requires to be favoured in general with a clear sky, none the worse of there being a disposition in the air towards frost. The streams, also, to which he has access must possess that degree of depth and rapidity which are necessary both to conceal the fish and assist the play of the bait; moreover, it is essential that, notwithstanding one and all of them may have been angled over repeatedly with the salmon-fly, they shall not previously, during the decrease of the river, have been disturbed with the worm itself; if so, should the angler impatiently have resorted to it before they were in order, every fish then descrying it would, at its reappearance on a favourable occasion, hold it in distrust.

The more simple description of tackle made use of in angling with the worm for salmon, consists of a large hook of the round-bend shape, Nos. from 16 to 18 of Adling-

ton's. It requires to be tied upon picked salmon-gut, fresh and round; the shank-end of the wire, in tying, ought to be left bare to the extent of nearly a quarter of an inch—thus



The single gut or foot line, from the hook upwards, should extend at least six feet, and terminate with a loop, so as to allow of its being readily annexed to the higher casting-line. It should also be furnished with a box-swivel fixed below the uppermost length.

With regard to the leads or plummets, these ought to be placed at a distance of eighteen inches from the hook, and should consist of at least five or six pellets of large shot, B. B. In all cases, the tackle in question requires to be heavily shotted, but in regulating the quantity of weight, it is quite necessary that attention be paid to the power, depth, and swerve of the cast or stream fished in.

As to the worms best adapted for salmon-fishing, I require to say little. The lob or large dew-worm is esteemed the favourite, (see Chapter VI.) Besides the lob-worm, the large button-worm is sometimes used, and possesses this advantage, that it is easily scoured, and becomes tougher and redder than the other.

In baiting the hook, two, sometimes three, worms are made use of. These are attached in the following way: Holding one of them betwixt the thumb and forefinger of the left hand, insert the point of your hook a short way below the head of the worm, which, I shall suppose, measures in length eight or nine inches; run the bend of the wire carefully along through the bait, to the full extent of an inch, in the direction of the tail; bring the point out again, and passing over an equal portion of the worm, re-enter it farther on, drawing up, as you do so, what has already been transfixed, along the shank of the hook; then, as before, bring out the point an inch lower

down. Repeat this proceeding a third time, and at its completion pull the worm up quite free from the hook to the gut above. Select a second worm, and insert, as formerly, the barbed wire below the head; run it along underneath, until the shank, bend, and point are completely concealed; then, with your finger and thumb, press down the first bait close against the shank, so as to hang over in small loops or folds.

In the event of a third worm being thought necessary, string on the one preceding it in the manner I have already described, and use the worm in question to cover the hook.

Another description of tackle used in worm-fishing for salmon consists of two hooks, Nos. 18 and 15 Adlington. Of these, the larger is tied on lowermost, and in the manner already described; the other, as in the minnow-tackle, being placed, its shank similarly exposed, a short way higher up the gut. The baiting is managed by running on one of the lob-worms over the wire of the lower hook, the point of which is entered at the head, and brought out near the tail of the bait. The worm is then drawn up, and run over the smaller hook, for which purpose the point of the latter is forced round, and inserted at the same perforation. It is brought out, however, in this case, near the middle of the worm, about an inch of which ought, on its being again drawn up, to occupy the gut above. In attaching the next worm, enter the barb of the lower wire near its middle; and, having run it up as before, thrust in the other hook at the same perforation, directing it through the loose portion of the bait. With the third worm cover the lower hook, entering it near the head, and drawing it up so as completely to conceal the wire.

I shall now describe the most approved way of angling with the worm for salmon. The performer requires to use a long, stiffish rod, eighteen feet and upwards, such as is employed for pike-trolling. The rings should be large, allowing the line to pass through them without the smallest restraint, and the reel itself ought to be facile in the extreme, having neither catch nor multiplicator. With regard to the quantity of line employed in casting, it

should not greatly exceed the length of the rod itself. Considering the manner in which it is weighted, and the mode of using it I am about to point out, it is difficult to manage more.

Having baited his hook, let the angler take his place at the head of the cast or salmon-stream he intends fishing. Immediately on commencing operations, there is a matter of observance to which he must pay particular attention. It forms, in fact, to some extent, the secret of the successful worm-fisher, and is embodied in this simple piece of instruction—viz., Let him draw out with his hand, over and above what he uses in casting, a yard or so of line from off the reel, allowing the same to hang loosely down towards the but-end of his rod. The intention of this is, that he may afford instant and unresisting compliance with the movements of the fish, on first seizing the bait. Should the least check occur in the running off the line, the salmon will, in most cases, quit before gorging.

I have now placed the angler at the head of a cast or salmon-stream. Let him heave his bait across, and in some measure with, the current, which I take to be so heavy or rapid as to bring round the weighted line, at a deliberate rate, until it attains its full stretch or tension. It is necessary, during this circuit, that the worm travel deep, in contact almost with the channel of the river, otherwise it will not prove attractive to the fish. On completing its range, the angler should allow it to hing, as it were, for a few seconds in subjection to the current, and, as he recovers it, use considerable caution.

When a check occurs, no matter from what cause it may, on the instant, be imagined [to proceed, he ought at once to give line, not merely exhausting what he has in preparation, but dealing out ungrudgingly a further supply from his reel, and this by means of the hand, so that it may run off easily, and, as it were, humour the movements of a supposed fish. The check itself may very possibly be occasioned by collision of the plummets with some stone or jut of rock, or it may proceed from the interference of a trout or eel; but this being quite uncertain, the angler has himself to blame, if, by treating it as such, he gives opportunity for a good fish to escape.



In general, however, I may remark, a mere check or stoppage is not the usual indication of a fish having seized the worm. What takes place has more the nature of an attack, quick and vigorous as is that of the pike on a running bait. The progress of the hook downwards is disturbed by a violent jerk or pull, sometimes in the direction of the current, but as frequently to the side, towards the lair or retreat of the salmon. Should this attack on the bait be met with unresistingly by the angler, and sufficient line allowed on the occasion, it will generally, after a short pause, become repeated, with less violence, indeed, but with more earnestness and effect. In the interval between the charges, however, care must be taken to sustain and give an animated appearance to the worms. If allowed to drop to the bottom, the salmon will no longer assail them. Accordingly, recover line with the hand, and be a little more chary than at first of yielding it when the fish renews the attack. At this point it is that a slight measure of resistance will act as a provocative; previously, its effect was to alarm and beget suspicion.

The salmon will now, after two or three successive assaults, bolt the bait; and his doing so may be inferred from a peculiar strain upon the line, more fixed and continued in character than any it had yet been subject to during the attack. The resolute and quick elevation of the rod will suffice to fix the hook deep among the entrails of the fish, and nothing further is left to be done but to fatigue and land him.

Such is the method of capturing salmon with the worm pursued in the neighbourhood of Kelso. It can be practised with success only when the river is clear and small. A slight degree of frost is also favourable, sharpening wonderfully the appetite of the fish.

It is not generally known, even by experienced salmon-fishers, that the worm may be angled with successfully, during the autumnal months, in a stretch of water perfectly still and clear, where salmon happen to be pent up by drought or other causes. I shall here relate what occurred to me in September 1848, as a proof that this fish, generally so nice in its feeding, and distrustful in its

habits, may occasionally be captured by a method of angling for it seldom if ever practised.

At the distance of nearly three miles from Kelso, a portion of the Teviot consists of a pool called Gogram, or, more properly, Heaton Mill Cauld. Here, should salmon happen to be in the river at all, they are generally found, the range of water being considerable, and shelter, in the form of rocks and large stones, abundant. On the occasion I speak of, the stock was comparatively small, amounting probably to about a dozen fish, salmon and grilse, most of which had been in the fresh water about a month, and had acquired a slight tinge of copper on the scales.

This number I conjecture to have been the correct one, from the fact that the heat of the day, and the restlessness induced by their long confinement to a particular portion of the river, had occasioned them to move about in a shoal from one end of the pool to the other—at such a short distance, too, from the surface, that no individual could escape detection. On fishing up towards this portion of Teviot, although several rods had preceded me, and the river was in a very low, unpromising state, I captured with the worm a beautiful new-run grilse of six pounds' weight, at a cast called the Thorntree Nick. The sun was at that time out in its full pride, and my moving upwards towards Heaton Mill, the fish having been secured, was actually unaccompanied with the slightest idea of further success, as regarded salmon. However, reaching the pool in question, I encountered a gentleman, rod in hand, endeavouring, by various means, to work upon the likings of the imprisoned fish, which, as I have already stated, were sailing up and down the pool, near the surface, and within a rod's cast of the north side of the river. They had refused fly, minnow, as well as parr-tail, and he was about to give up all attempts at a capture, when I suggested a trial of the worm. A hook was accordingly baited in the approved style, and dropt softly in advance of the moving shoal, the operator standing behind a tree, out of sight of the fish. Almost instantly, four or five of the number made a rush towards it, but as quickly retired, frightened seemingly by the appearance of the rod which

superintended the worm. To obviate this effect, I attached to my own line a small float or piece of cord, just sufficient in size to keep the bait up, at the depth of water which I judged the shoal moved in. I was enabled thus to hold back the point of my rod, and allow rest to the lure in a spot where the salmon were certain ere long to observe it.

Having pitched in the worm with due caution, I took up my station behind an alder tree on the bank, in order to wait the result. Almost instantly, out sailed the float at a steady pace, and having humoured it for a few seconds by letting off line with my hand, I struck home into the heart of a noble grilse, which, in the course of two or three minutes, I had the satisfaction of bringing to land. The hook, I may mention, was an Adlington, No. 17, baited with a couple of large lob-worms. This is not the only fish of the true salmon-breed I have taken with the worm in calm, clear water. On the 12th of October 1842, when fishing for eels with a mangled worm in Tweed, on the Killmouth Pool, below Makerston, I captured a nice grilse at a depth of water exceeding twenty feet—a circumstance which I am inclined to believe is one of extreme rarity.

Although the true salmon (*Salmo salar*) will seldom, in a full or swollen state of the river, show regard to bait of any kind, yet it does so occasionally. On the 24th of October 1838, I killed a newly-run grilse, eight pounds in weight, with the salmon-roe, when the Tweed was large and thick. Bull-trout and whitlings take it freely on such occasions, (*vide* Chapter VIII.) On the Nairn river, in 1837, I captured with the worm a small clean salmon, the water being brown and full; and I have frequently on Teviot seen kelted fish taken, by means of the minnow or parr-tail, under similar circumstances. I recollect with the former bait enticing a newly-run salmon, of above nine pounds' weight, out of the same river, (17th February 1844,) under circumstances not at all favourable for the angler, the streams running large, and, although not absolutely dirty, being highly impregnated with snow-water. As to bull-trout or whitlings, they will snatch at a worm, minnow, or parr-tail without much ceremony—I do not say freely or at all times, but with many

degrees less fastidiousness than the salmon, during floods or while running. Cold weather also appetises them wonderfully; but when the river is clear and small, they become a shy, distrustful fish. As kelts, however, they are, in all states of water, voracious, and will dash equally at bait and fly with the fearlessness and avidity of the pike itself.

## CHAPTER XIV.

## PIKE AND PIKE-FISHING.

Pickeral; Jack; Pike; Luce; Gedd.

FIN-RAYS.—D. 19; P. 14; V. 10; A. 17; C. 19.

GENERIC CHARACTERS.—Head depressed, large, oblong, blunt; jaws, palatine bones and vomer furnished with teeth of various sizes; body elongated, rounded on the back; sides compressed, covered with scales; dorsal fin placed very far back over the anal fin.—*Farrell*, vol. i. p. 383.

ALTHOUGH, in common with most anglers, I esteem salmon-fishing and the capturing of trout, whether with fly, minnow, or worm, pre-eminent among river sports, the trolling for pike also, in places where they are known to attain great size and are tolerably abundant, is an amusement by no means uninteresting.

Not many years ago I practised this branch of the art with great success, my principal scene of action being the river Teviot, or, in fact, two or three pools belonging to it, which lie in the vicinity of Roxburgh, a small village situated about three miles from Kelso. As these pools, or the portions of them where pike lay, (for they were not all throughout equally infested by this species of water-pirate,) are neither extensive nor numerous, I generally managed to test them, quite sufficiently for the day, in the course of an hour or little more. In a brown water, and when the fish were in taking humour, I sometimes confined myself to a single hole or haunt, from which, ere the elapse of twenty minutes, I have managed, over and over again, to abstract a large creel-load of fish, varying in point of numbers from two to six, and in point of weight from ten to two pounds. The period of the day I commonly, on

these occasions, devoted to pike-trolling, ranged from one to five in the afternoon, and often succeeded a morning spent in trouting, when I was well supplied with fresh and proper-sized baits. In their edible qualities, the Teviot pike were the finest I ever tasted. They cut firm and white, had little or none of that slimy flavour which this fish generally possesses, and in their formation were comparatively small-headed, deep-flanked, and broad-shouldered.

The breed are said to have been introduced into the river by the late Marquis of Lothian, along with a stock of perch of a valuable description, attaining individually the weight of three or four pounds. It seems more probable that they found their way into Teviot by the Ale water, one of its tributaries from Alemoor Loch, which they have been long known to inhabit.

Betwixt the years 1838 and 1846 I captured about one hundred and fifty pike out of Teviot alone, five-sixths of them with the rod, and, as has been already mentioned, chiefly during spare hours, and on my return from some trouting excursion. Of these the largest was a male fish, and weighed about seventeen pounds. I caught one with the minnow and single gut line, on the 8th of March 1845, weighing fourteen pounds, and I have not unfrequently taken others approaching to twelve pounds. That there existed until lately in the Heaton-mill cauld several fish heavier than any I have named, cannot be questioned. I once hooked and played one, apparently a twenty-pounder, until quite exhausted, and had I been accommodated with a gaff-hook or convenient landing-place, would certainly have secured him. As it turned out, in the absence of either, I was compelled to use more than ordinary force in order to bring him within reach of my hand. The tackle, being formed of single gut, accordingly broke, and the fish, after lying motionless for some minutes on the surface of a bed of thick weeds, made his escape. A pike weighing nineteen pounds was killed, some years ago, with the leister, a little way below Ormiston-mill. This, perhaps, was the largest, actually secured, of Teviot pike.

The introduction of these fish into the principal tributary of Tweed, conduced, there is no question, very materially to injure the salmon-fishings; nor, as may be sup-

posed, did the common trout remain wholly unscathed. With regard to the ravages committed among the fry of the salmon, I may mention that almost every pike captured by me during the months of April and May contained in its stomach, or disgorged on being landed, the remains of one or more smolts. These frequently were quite entire—to all appearance, indeed, newly killed; they were sometimes also in a partly-digested state, and on other occasions presented to the eye little more than was sufficient to distinguish them as having been small fish. I have taken five or six salmon-fry, in the stages above described, out of the stomach of a single pike. Two, three, or four, were a matter of common occurrence. Such being the case, and if it be true, what many ichthyologists affirm, that fish dissolve their food with such astonishing rapidity as to rival, in some instances, the action of fire—nay, allowing that the stomach of the pike occupied a couple of hours in completing the digestive process—the amount of havoc committed by this ravager on Teviot, during the smolt season, must have been very considerable. Confining my calculation within very moderate bounds, I shall presume that each pike, on the average, as his daily meal, during the months already referred to, engrossed four salmon or bull-trout fry. This, in the course of sixty days, gave an allowance to every individual in Teviot of two hundred and forty smolts: and supposing there were, from Ancrum-bridge downward, a stretch of water nine or ten miles in length, not more than one thousand pike, the entire number consumed by these, in less than one-sixth of the year, must have amounted to two hundred and forty thousand, or nearly a quarter of a million of salmon-fry—a greater number, there is no question, than is killed during the same extent of time by all the angling poachers in the district put together.

I describe a work of devastation among the salmon-fry, which really, as far as Teviot was concerned, looked serious. Up to the autumn of 1846, the pike of that river being plentiful breeders and of quick growth, were rapidly on the increase. Portions of the water hitherto exempt from their presence had become occupied by them. Among others, the choicest salmon and trout cast—that opposite Heaton-mill—literally for a

season swarmed with these invaders. I lost one day in it four minnow-tackles in succession, all of them having been bit through directly above the hooks by these rascals, and, on attaching my bait to a gimp set, secured two of the gang. In some pools—for instance, the one on which Roxburgh boat-house is situated—the river-trout had become nearly extirpated, and there was reason to fear that every succeeding year would add to the number and extend the ravages of these ferocious freebooters. Fortunately, however, for the character of the lower portion of the river as trouting water—one it has long maintained, and which, I trust, may long pertain to it—early in August 1846, a flood, unparalleled in the memory of the oldest inhabitant in Teviotdale, took place, and one effect of this extraordinary overflow of the valley was to break up the harbours of the pike in Teviot, and temporarily dislodge and carry off their inhabitants. Since then, however, as I anticipated, they have gradually increased in number, although happily not to a very alarming degree. Of their resuming their former mastery over the pools I am under no apprehensions, as they are now regularly fished for, and appreciated as food in the district.

I shall now proceed to make a few general observations relative to pike-fishing, and the ordinary modes of pursuing it. The pike-rod ought invariably to be long, stout in the material, and stiffish in the make. It should be provided with a reel or winch of corresponding dimensions, and line to suit. Of pike-tackles there are in common use three or four descriptions. The simplest, and in certain seasons and places the most deadly, is the gorge-tackle. This consists of a double hook, having a detachable arming formed of brass wire.

The lure commonly employed on the gorge-tackle is a small trout or parr, but it is capable, from its construction, of being baited in various ways, and with divers delicacies and attractions—such as frogs, morsels of bacon, &c. &c. In baiting with the trout or any other small fish, enter the detached end of the wire-arming through the mouth, and, passing it along under the skin of the fish, bring it out again, avoiding the vent, as near as possible to the tail or caudal fin. Draw all tight, and observe that the hooks protrude freely on either side of the mouth. The tail, if



thought requisite, may be fastened with thread or small twine to the wire-arming, in order to keep the bait in shape, and allow of its being gorged more easily.

In angling, either pitch the bait forward by means of the rod, or heave it from you with the hand. Allow it, if in deep water, to sink well, before commencing to fetch it home. Do this by degrees, impelling it towards the surface in short urgent movements, and then, just as you catch a glimpse of it, relaxing your pull, and thereby occasioning it to drop again towards the bottom. Repeat, unless prevented by weeds or other obstacles, this mode of drawing home the bait, until you bring it to the water's edge. As to the manner in which pike usually attack the gorge-bait, no one that has ever felt it—for it can be judged of only as a sensation—can easily forget it. It is not, as might be expected from the character of the fish, a bold, eager, voracious grasp; quite the contrary—it is a slow, calculating grip. There is nothing about it dashing or at all violent; no stirring of the fins, no lashing of the tail, no expressed fury or revenge. The whole is mouth-work—calm, deliberate, but bone-crashing and merciless mouth-work. You think, at the moment, you actually hear the shutting, the clanging sound of the assailer's jawbones—the compression and racking of the supposed victim betwixt them. Always give the pike time to swallow. If he is disposed to take them, allow him five, or even ten minutes. A slight measure of resistance generally, however, provokes him to be more expeditious, and even a prick from one of the projecting barbs of the gorge-hook, casually inflicted upon him, has often the same effect; but I would, in most cases, be careful how I use much freedom with the rascal, for the boldest fish are sometimes shy and distrustful beyond expectation. When a large pike has fairly swallowed the bait, he soon gives intimation of it, and even a small one makes his chain ring.

The running-tackle for pike I recommend to be made up of three hooks, like the parr-tail tackle, on a larger scale, (*vide* Chapter VII.) and dressed upon good gimp traces with a pair of box swivels, the lower one fastened about eighteen inches above the hooks, and the uppermost at or near the junction of the casting and reel lines. Bait with a small trout or parr, and according to the directions

already given in my chapter on minnow and parr-tail fishing, when treating of the spinning lure. Should the trout be too large to be employed entire, cut it, as there instructed, into two parts, using the lower one, divested of its fins, tail-foremost. See that the bait spins freely, and let the striking of the fish command your particular attention. Never attempt this operation until he has fairly turned with the lure betwixt his jaws, and you actually feel his weight; then, knowing the strength of your tackle, drive the barbed hooks smartly across his mouth, and he is fastened to your heart's content.

In loch-trolling from a boat, it is common, where pike are plentiful, to crowd the tackle with hooks. The advantage of this practice is very doubtful. Certainly, it does not in the slightest degree assist or improve the spinning; and as to rendering the getting hold of the fish more certain, experience has led me to believe that the parr-tail running-tackle is, if properly managed, as sufficiently effective as any other combination of hooks in use.

It may be from prejudice, but I must confess that, with regard to the form and making up of pike and trolling-tackles commonly used by English anglers, they appear to me to be, many of them, shop contrivances—mere fancy articles, made to please the eye of the purchaser. In several cases, also, they are the produce of a whim or speculative notion on the part of some angler who, no doubt, can expatiate largely on the virtues and marvellous facilities of his invention—perhaps can enumerate instances of its successful application, and bids defiance to the possibility of its being excelled or outrivalled. But there is a great difference, mark me, betwixt the actual and the possible—betwixt tackle tried by experiment, and contrivances whose recommendatory points are only in the brain of the inventor. To the former, there is due a fixed degree of appreciation; to the latter, little more than the regard called forth by an object which excites our curiosity.

Of snap or spring hooks for pike I shall say nothing, holding them, as I do, quite superfluous; neither shall I venture to describe the live-bait tackle, never having used it. I have no doubt, however, that angling for pike with the live bait is, in certain places, a very deadly mode of fishing; but the want of bleak, roach, and dace in our Scot-

tish waters, or of any good substitute for them—the minnow and loach being, in point of size, too insignificant—is a great drawback to its practice. Set lines and trimmers I have employed, in many places, successfully. With the latter, on a favourable day, excellent sport may be obtained on many of our smaller lakes. A boat, of course, will be required, along with a competent hand to arrange and drop the bait. I have assisted, on several occasions, in taking upwards of a dozen pike by this means, in the course of two or three hours. Where the fish are plentiful, the management of eight or nine trimmers will frequently give ample employment to the parties occupying the boat; one of whom, during the progress of the main sport, may, without detriment to it, wage further war with the trolling-rod.

With regard to fly-fishing for pike, I used to practise it, many years ago, with tolerable success, in a shallow loch in Fife. I have also tried it in Perthshire; but the result of my several experiments with the pike-fly is, that I am convinced it is not a lure at all attractive to large or even middle-sized fish; that, in fact, few of a greater weight than three or four pounds are ever tempted to seize it, and these do so only in shoal water, and during dull, windy days. Pike-flies ought to be big and gaudy, the wings formed each of the eye of a peacock's tail-feather,—the body plentifully bedizened with dyed wool, bright hackles, and tinsels. Bead-eyes, also, are held in estimation, and gimp or wire arming is of course essential.

The pike, although a bold, vindictive fish, careless of the angler's presence when in pursuit of its prey, is nevertheless sulky in its disposition, not to be tempted, at times, by any bait, although dropped immediately before its snout. It is liable, also, to be operated upon by the weather, more so even than the trout is; and, moreover, in many places, has its feeding hours, apart from which it is loth, unless under very favourable circumstances, to follow the bait. As regards seasons, however, I have caught it in Teviot throughout all the year, but the pike of this river may possibly form one of several exceptions to the general rule; for in the Loch of the Lowes, in Selkirkshire, as well as in certain lakes in Ross-shire, where I have, over and over again, exerted my utmost skill, during the spring months,

to secure a single fish, I never could accomplish my object sooner than the month of May; and even then, the disposition of the pike to take freely was very questionably manifested.

Out of Till, which is an early river, and swarms with pike, I once took several of these fish during spring, and have no doubt they may be captured there at any season. Their spawning months, in the south of Scotland, are March and April; and they are considered by many epicures as finest in condition when full of roe. For my own part, with regard to the Teviot pike, at no season did I ever capture one which was not highly relishable, being firm, white in the flesh, and well tasted. Those of the Loch of the Lowes possess the same qualities; but it is very different with the pike of Yetholm Loch, of Earn, Tay, and twenty other places where I have taken them. On the contrary, the fish of these waters are, with few exceptions, soft and slimy—in fact, positively disagreeable to the smell and taste. It is a great improvement to the fish to have it crimped, immediately on its being taken, at the water-side. I have seen grilises and salmon also treated in this manner, and it brings out the curdy firmness of the fish amazingly in boiling. After cleansing, wrap up the pike in a cloth brought for the purpose, and transfer it to your pannier. The directions for boiling it are similar to those I have elsewhere given for the boiling of salmon; only it is advisable, first of all, to immerse the fish for a minute or two in hot, scalding water, and thereby render easy the removal of the scales by means of a knife or scraper. A pike of about eight pounds in weight, when baked or roasted, forms an excellent dish. It is, of course, much improved by various sauces and stuffings; but it is not, as some affirm, mainly indebted to these for its edible qualities.

I have not as yet attempted any description of the places generally resorted to, and held in defence by the pike or jack. They consist, in lochs, of all shoal and weedy parts, of bays and covert places, such as are formed by a projecting wall or sunken tree. In rivers, they include the by-water, and such spots as are not much operated on by the ordinary current. Dam-heads, moreover, or the pools superintending them, are favourite

haunts with this fish ; the rich mould which settles and remains in many of them, after floods, conducing to the growth of various kinds of water-weeds, such as the pickerel, &c.—the varied depth, also, and limitation of currents, being in accordance with its tastes and habits.

Some naturalists affirm that the pike is a solitary fish. This I hold to be quite a mistake. They are, at certain seasons, as gregarious, if not more so, than the trout. True, they do not swim exactly side by side like perch, but, as accords with their size and rapacity, maintain a wider range ; and when on the bask, or in sunning humour, distribute themselves along the margin or plot of floating weeds, at short distances, each seemingly having its own lurking-place apportioned to it. I have captured frequently five or six pike, one after the other, out of the same hole, and from the same stance ; although, in experimenting previously, for the space of an hour over the cast, I was unable to detect the presence of a single fish. None, in fact, I am convinced, were at that time upon the spot, and they had evidently, in the interval, taken possession of it as a body, not as individuals.

As to the weather and state of water best suited for pike-fishing, the former I esteem most when dull and warm, there being at the time a breeze from the south or south-west. Sunny glimpses, now and then, are not unfavourable, and the approach of thunder, so inimical to the hopes of the trout-fisher, may be held auspicious. On cold days, however windy, pike seldom bite well, although in Teviot, during the Spring season, I have met with exceptions. In this river, also, I have noticed that these fish were in high humour for taking immediately before a flood, and when the water was just beginning to swell. This was owing, no doubt, to the anticipations entertained by them, through instinct, of being deprived for some length of time of their usual food, which, during a thick, muddy water, they were unable to discern and secure. They, moreover, bit freely when the river was of a deep brown colour, and I have caught them in pools highly impregnated with snow ; in fact, there was no state of water, actual floods excepted, during which the river-pike I allude to might not have been induced to take.

A single advice as to the mode of despatching pike when landed, and of extracting most readily, and with least danger, the gorge-hook, may not be reckoned superfluous. The quickest, simplest, and most effectual way of killing the fish, is by urging a sharp instrument, such as the strong blade of a pocket-knife, through the spinal marrow at its junction with the brain, a spot at once ascertained, from its being situated immediately behind the skull bone. The pike being thus despatched, open the gill-cover, and, cutting through the gills themselves, allow them to bleed freely. This done, take hold of the wire-arming of the gorge-hook, and, drawing it tightly up, you will discover your hook lodged fast among the entrails of the fish. You have then only to cut it out with your knife, and, detaching it from the wire, draw the latter, along with the bait, through the lifeless and unresisting jaws.

The pike infests a large number of our Scottish lakes, and is found also in some of our principal rivers, the Tay, Spey, and Earn included. It abounds in the upper parts of Loch Lomond, in Lochs Ness, Tay, Earn, Tummel, Awe, Vennachar, Katrine, Leven, &c., &c. ; in St Mary's Loch, Lochs Maben, Ken, and the numerous lakes of Wigtownshire and Kirkcudbright. It also inhabits some of the Ross-shire lochs — Garve, Achnanault, Ledgowan, and Ussie ; but is, comparatively speaking, a stranger in Sutherland and Caithness—the only sheet of water where it holds sway, in the first-mentioned county, being the loch of Migdale, to which it was introduced some years ago by Mr Dempster of Skiho. The policy of its introduction into lakes stocked with trout has very properly been held questionable. An instance of the detriment done by heedlessly promoting the extension of this ruthless and powerful fish, may be cited as regards Loch Awe, where, I am informed, the depredations carried on by it of late years have been of the most serious nature, largely affecting, in the estimation of the fly-fisher, the former high character of the lake.

PERCH.—With the pike or “gedd” is naturally associated the perch—a fish which, although it abounds in the Lowlands of Scotland, and is met with in Loch Awe, and several of the Perthshire lakes near Dunkeld, has

not yet been introduced to any extent beyond the Grampians. Being a good, edible fish, and not offensive in its disposition—one, withal, retentive of life, which may be transferred without cost or trouble—it might, I think, be made the subject of experiments by many of the large landed proprietors in the north of Scotland. In several of the lakes in Sutherlandshire, for instance, where there is an overstock of small valueless trout, its introduction would prove beneficial. It is possible enough, however, that, as in the case of the pike or minnow, all efforts to naturalise and propagate it may prove unsuccessful; the asperity of the climate, and want of adequate food, acting as drawbacks to its health and increase.

The perch is a simple fish, and easily captured during feeding hours. A boy armed with very indifferent fishing gear—a hazel wand, a string, a bait-hook, a cork, and a handful of earth-worms—may, without the slightest exercise of skill or wariness, in some places, fetch them out as fast as he can drop his bait. Large-sized perch, however, are not so easily provoked to bite as the small fry, and will frequently despise the worm or maggot, so acceptable to their juniors. To these saucy epicures, no greater delicacy can be presented than a live minnow; and the manner of baiting the hook with this lure is extremely simple, although, I confess, somewhat tinged with cruelty. It consists merely in running it, from side to side, through the backbone below the dorsal-fin. When this is properly done, and the minnow gently projected forwards to the spot which the perch are presumed to occupy, it will be found to retain life for some time, and, while struggling at the requisite depth, by support of the float, prove irresistible to the wariest and daintiest fish. But I have no intention to enlarge further upon the subject of perch-fishing. Proficiency in capturing this simple fish is easily acquired; and the few instructions which contribute to its speedy attainment, are to be met with in almost every treatise upon angling.

**THE EEL.**—This well-known fish, which is found more or less in every river and lake throughout the British empire, and abounds even in some of our ditches, is held in great abhorrence by many anglers; nor, in Scotland, is it relished to the degree it deserves as an article of food.

On Tweedside, for instance, a few years ago, not one person in a hundred would have ventured to taste it when cooked ; and this prejudice, although to a certain extent removed, still exists. I would not have introduced any mention of the eel into these pages, had it not been to describe a method of capturing it not generally known. Arm yourself with a rod or sapling the thickness of your forefinger, and measuring in length from three and a half to five feet. An ordinary-sized walking-stick will suit the purpose. Cut a notch at the smaller end, then take two or three yards of strong cord, to one extremity of which attach a large bait-hook, No. 15 Adlington. Procure some minnows or lob-worms, and run one of them over the exposed part of the wire. If a minnow, do so tail foremost, covering the barb with the head. Thus baited, apply the bend of the hook to the notch in the stick, then grasp the handle or thick end of this implement along with the cord, which, when doing so, must be drawn tight up, so that the baited hook will retain its position on the notch. By this means one may insinuate, without difficulty, the worm or minnow into any small hole or crevice where an eel is presumed to lurk. Cairns, dam-dykes, and embankments of turf or stone, generally afford the desired facilities. On the introduction of the bait, should an eel be present, it will instantly seize hold. When this happens, the angler is required to slacken the cord and withdraw his stick. The eel will then, in most cases, retire with the bait to the extremity of its haunt, drawing a foot or two of the line along with it. No opposition must be given to its movements for two or three minutes, in the course of which time, if a large one, it will have pouched the bait. A little exertion is then necessary to draw it out, and I have seen a very strong cord broken through the resistance offered by the fish under these circumstances. On favourable ground, one may manage to capture a dozen or two of eels in this way within a short space of time.

In regard to eels, it is well known that what are termed, on Tweedside, cairns—or heaps of stones raised by the tacksman of salmon-fishings in some parts of the river, for the purpose of inveigling running fish into a certain description of net attached to them—afford shelter to large



numbers of these fish, which, if the grilse or salmon, happening to become entangled, is allowed, through neglect or otherwise, to continue two or three hours in this state of thralldom, will, forcing an entrance through the gill or mouth, speedily disencumber it of its entrails; nay, if allowed to pursue their work of molestation unchecked, absolutely hollow it out, until little remains but a sack or skinful of bones.

In the holes and crevices with which these cairns abound, I have seen the method of eel-fishing above described very successfully practised, the river being exceedingly low and the day bright and hot.

I may mention, in regard to eels, that their perception of smell is wonderfully acute. To test this faculty, I have frequently, from a bridge or high bank, dropt my hook baited with a worm over a bed of sand or mud, the entire extent of which was covered, to the depth of five or six inches, with clear running water. Although, at the time of my doing so, not an eel was to be seen astir on the surface of the bed, yet, after the lapse of a couple of minutes, during which period my bait lay distinguishable below me on the spot where it had been originally dropt, I invariably observed, when making the experiment, a slight movement begin to take place in the mud or sand in front of the worm, and at a distance often of six or seven feet. This movement was always speedily succeeded by the appearance of an eel, sometimes two, which, on leaving the bed, leisurely directed its way towards the bait. On arriving within four inches of the worm, it invariably halted for a single second, and then, darting suddenly forward, seized hold of its supposed victim. I have taken five or six eels in succession, under the circumstances described, in the course of half an hour. On withdrawing the bait, at the approach of the eel, the disappointed fish will generally hunt about, like a hound at fault, over the whole bed, before it betakes itself to its place of concealment.

## CHAPTER XV.

## COOKING OF SALMON, ETC.

I SHALL conclude these chapters with a few culinary observations on the dressing of salmon, trout, and other fresh-water fish. The method of cooking salmon on Tweedside differs in many respects from that practised elsewhere ; but it is not, on this account, without its recommendations, and by one who has enjoyed in perfection what is termed a fisherman's "kettle," the Metropolitan mode of dressing the king of fishes stands a chance of being resolutely decried in future. Our Border epicures, it is necessary to state, are in general good judges of a proper fish. Unlike the inhabitants of Leeds or Birmingham, they can distinguish at a glance the kelt, spring-spawner, or bull-trout, from the clean or new-run salmon. They can pronounce, also, without hesitation, upon the length of time a fish has been kept, whether taken from the sea or river ; and if from the latter, how long ago it left the salt water. In all these matters, I grant, they are not only well versed, but somewhat fastidious, and regulate their cooking accordingly.

BOILING OF SALMON. — It is essential that a salmon intended for boiling should have been newly caught ; the fresher it can be procured the better, and a fish transferred from the net or gaff-hook to the pan or kettle is always sure to give the most satisfaction. The way of treating a salmon, under one or other of these circumstances, is as follows :—Crimp the fish, immediately on its being killed, by the water-side, making the cuts slantwise, and at a distance of two inches from each other ; separate also the gills, and, holding it by the tail, immerse its body

in the stream for the space of three or four minutes, moving it backwards and forwards, so as to expedite the flowing off of the blood. In the mean time, give orders, if you have not previously done so, to have the fire briskened and the pot or cauldron filled, or nearly so, with spring water, set on to boil. The fish, after being crimped and bled as I have directed, must now be conveyed to a table or kitchen-dresser, and there thoroughly cleansed inside. This done, divide it through the backbone into cuts or slices, of the thickness already indicated in the crimping, throwing these into a large hand-basin as you proceed. I shall presume, by this time, that the water is at the boiling point. If so, convey to it a large bowlful of kitchen salt; do not scrimp the material, or you ruin the fish. Allow the water, thus checked, again to bubble up, and then pop in the cuts of salmon, head and all. Several minutes will elapse before the liquid contents of the pot once more arrive at the boiling point; when they do so, begin to note the time, and see, as you measure it, that the fire is a brave one. For all fish under nine pounds weight, allow ten minutes brisk boiling; and when exceeding nine pounds, grant an extra minute to every additional pound. When ready, serve hot, along with the brine in which the fish was cooked. This is salmon in perfection, and constitutes the veritable kettle of Tweedside, such as frothed and foamed in the days of the merry monks of Melrose and Kelso, and what, no doubt, has been feasted on in a less civilised age than ours, by the crowned heads of rival kingdoms within the towers of Roxburgh, Wark, and Norham. Who knows, indeed, but some sturdy Roman imperator has tickled his palate at a fish-kettle on Tweedside, and taken home to the seven-hilled city, and the gourmands of the senate-house, a description of the primitive banquet?

A fresh salmon, thus cooked, is remarkable for its curd and consistence, and very unlike the soft oily mass generally presented under that designation. Even when it has been kept a day or two, this method of boiling will be found to bring out more equally the true flavour of the fish than if it had been placed entire, with a mere sprinkling of salt, in the fish-pan. Under these circumstances, melted butter is preferred by some to the simple gravy

above mentioned ; but no true fish-eater can tolerate the substitute.

Through the kindness of Thomas White, Esq., solicitor, Berwick-on-Tweed, I have been favoured with another much approved of recipe for the boiling of this delicious fish :—

“ Cut off the tail of the salmon, grilse, or sea-trout, about four inches above the fin, then split the fish in two halves along the bone, and, after removing the entrails, cut it across into pieces of about two and a half or three inches in breadth, or a little broader if required. Remove all the blood from the bone, and wash the cuts perfectly clean in cold water. Hard water, both in washing and boiling the fish, is to be preferred. The scales ought not to be scraped off.

“ The water in which the fish is boiled ought previously to be made nearly as salt as to float an egg ; and the cuts should be put into this salt-water or pickle when boiling, with the skin uppermost. The quicker they boil the better.

“ If the fish weighs twenty pounds, let it boil twenty minutes ; if fifteen pounds, eighteen minutes ; if ten pounds, fifteen minutes ; and if five pounds, ten minutes. While the cuts are boiling, the pickle ought to be continually and carefully skimmed, and when sufficiently boiled, the cuts cannot be too speedily taken out of the pickle. Dish quickly, skin uppermost, with a quantity of the pickle in which they are boiled.”

**THE CURING OR KIPPERING OF SALMON.**—Kippered salmon is a well-known article of food, and in high esteem for its relishable qualities, at the breakfast-table ; but it is generally met with in a faulty state, either too hard or too salt.

The salmon best adapted for kippering are large fish, averaging from fourteen pounds to thirty pounds in weight ; the smaller ones and grilses make, however, excellent green kippers, to be eaten when soft and juicy. Such kippers as are intended for winter use should be prepared in the month of October, immediately before close-time. Although the term “ kipper,” signifying a he-fish, is likewise applied to salmon cured in a particular way, it is really a matter of indifference whether the male or the female be used for

the purpose in question. It so happens that, in the kippering season, the generality of males captured are of a coarser, if not larger, description than individuals of the other sex ; the market price also is, in consequence, somewhat lower, and they are generally preferred as fitter to be operated upon.

In kippering a salmon, the first step taken is to lay the fish on its broad side on a board or table, and by means of a sharp knife cut it up from tail to head, close along the backbone, taking care not to injure the belly or keel by inserting the blade too far. Disengage and throw away the entrails and gills ; also wash the fish well, removing and pressing out every bloody particle from the inside. Take out the eyes, and insert a pinch or two of salt in their place ; also cut away the vent. This done, sprinkle a handful or two of brown sugar over the inside, and above it the same quantity, or rather more, of common salt. The latter will occasion the sugar to penetrate, and help to improve the flavour of the salmon, better than if the materials had been previously mixed up together. Some recommend the rubbing in of salt and sugar, by means of the hand, against the scales of the fish externally, as well as over the inside ; but this is not at all necessary. After the application in question has been made, lay the salmon flat upon a board, the inside turned uppermost ; cover with a cloth, and allow it to remain twenty-four hours, or, if preferred saltish, thirty-six hours, in a cool place ; after which, give it a slight wash, in order to improve its appearance, and arrange two or three wooden pegs or skewers along the interior, from flank to flank, to keep it stretched ; then hang it up to dry in a place neither too hot nor too cool. Should the weather prove fine, an hour or two of exposure to the sun and air will conduce to accelerate the curing process, and render it less liable to be injured by dust and smoke. Salmon, on being kippered, are subject to a considerable loss of weight ; for instance, a fish that originally weighed sixteen pounds will, when cured, not exceed eleven. In broiling kipper, it is a great improvement to wrap up the cuts, which ought not to be made too thin, in white paper. This will prevent them being smoked, or becoming too hard externally. Fresh salmon

broiled in the same manner is delicious, and made to retain its flavour in full perfection.

The gentleman already mentioned has also favoured me with an account of the modes of kippering and pickling salmon adopted at Berwick, and communicated to him, the one by a fish salesman, and the other by a celebrated salmon-curer in that town.

“**KIPPERED SALMON.**—Split the fish in two halves, along the bone, from the tail to the head, but without separating the two halves, and after removing the entrails and all the blood from the bone, wash the fish perfectly clean in cold, hard water. The scales ought never to be scraped off.

“Rub a little dry salt upon the outside of the fish, against the scales, from the tail to the head, and throw some loosely upon the inside, without rubbing. Lay the salmon or grilse, when thus salted, upon a flat table or board, and cover with another piece of board or thin deal; let it remain so covered for forty-eight hours or twenty-four hours, according to the size of the fish. A salmon of from ten pounds to twenty pounds requires to lie in this state for forty-eight hours; a grilse requires twenty-four hours only. Three or four plaster laths or hoop sticks must then, to keep it flat, be placed across the fish, which should afterwards be hung up by the tail to dry.

“The fish is in perfection, as a kipper, after it has been dried about twenty-four hours; and it will keep, thus kippered, for many months, though apt to get too salt, and require steeping in cold water, before use.”

“**PICKLED SALMON.**—Allow the fish to lie twenty-four hours in winter, or twelve in summer, after being caught. It will not take the salt when quite fresh. Then split, wash, and cut into junks, as directed in boiling salmon. Boil these in a very strong salt pickle, allowing to a fish of eight pounds weight nine minutes; one of twelve pounds, fourteen minutes; one of fifteen pounds, seventeen minutes; and one of twenty pounds, twenty-five minutes. A number of salmon boiled together, of ten pounds weight each, require fifteen minutes. The time must, in all cases, be calculated from the moment the water returns to the boiling point, and not from that in which the fish are put into it.

“When the salmon has boiled the proper time, take it

out of the pickle as expeditiously as possible, put it on a drainer, and allow it to cool for twenty-four hours, in summer. It should then be packed, skin uppermost, in kits or jars, and completely covered with cold vinegar and a small quantity of the pickle or liquor in which it was boiled. To exclude the air effectually, the kits or jars in which it is placed should be run over, on the top of the vinegar, with a little boiling lard, and the whole secured by a tin or earthenware cover. Jars are preferable to kits, as the air can be more readily excluded from the fish. Care must be taken, on the exhaustion of the vinegar, to add a fresh supply. Salmon, in this state, will remain good for months."

Cured salmon was at one time a great article of trade of Scotland. We find frequent allusion to it in old acts of parliament, which define the *binde* or size of the barrel to be employed in the packing of it, and enforce strict penalties against all who infringe the regulations.

The method of cooking or roasting salmon at the lakes of Killarney, in Ireland, is pretty generally known; but as the recipe is an excellent one, and I have seen it acted on in Scotland, with this difference, that the skewers employed were cut from the juniper bush instead of arbutus, I shall insert it.

"The salmon, as soon as caught, to be cut into slices, which are split, and a strong skewer of arbutus run through each as close to the skin as possible. These skewers are then stuck upright in a sod of turf, before a clear wood fire, and constantly turned and basted with salt and water; the fish, when sufficiently roasted, is served up on the skewers, which are supposed to communicate a peculiar aromatic flavour."

RECIPE FOR POTTING CHARR AND TROUT.—The following are the ingredients required, in order to pot a stone-weight of fish :—

3	tea-spoonfuls of ground black pepper.
3	" " allspice.
2	" " mace.
1	" " cloves.
1	" " nutmeg.
½	" " cayenne.

Keep these carefully corked up in a small phial, and add, when employing them, a little salt.

Cut open the fish, and clean well with a dry cloth. Remove the heads, tails, and fins, along with the back-bones. This done, apply the mixture, transferring them as you do so to a baking dish. Cover well with fresh butter, and place the dish in a slow oven, allowing it to remain there until the bones of the fish become dissolved ; drain off the butter, and remove the charr or trout into potting dishes ; press them well down, and pour fresh butter over them. Trout treated in this manner ought to be red-fleshed, and not exceed three-quarters of a pound in weight. If well selected and in good season, they will be found not a whit inferior to the best charr.

**SIMPLE RECIPE FOR COOKING A WHITLING OR GOOD TROUT BY THE RIVER SIDE.**—Kindle a fire of dry wood. Take your fish when just out of the water ; fill his mouth with salt ; roll him up in two or three folds of an old newspaper, twisting the ends well together. Immerse all in the water, until the paper has become thoroughly saturated. Then lay the fish among the embers of your fire. When the paper presents a well charred appearance, the trout is properly done, and will prove a savoury and acceptable morsel. The fish, I may observe, must *not* be cut open and cleaned. During the firing process, the intestines and other impurities will draw together, and not in the slightest degree injure the flavour of the trout.

The well-known cooking utensil called the conjuror, will be found serviceable to anglers on the banks of our Highland streams, and give opportunities to the epicure of enjoying a trout or charr feast, while the fish is in its freshest condition.

**THE FRYING OF TROUT.**—Preparatory to frying trout, it is common in Scotland to enwrap the fish in a coating of oatmeal. I am not national enough in my tastes to approve of this mode of concealing its flavour, and I certainly prefer, if the fish is to be encrusted at all, the adoption of bread-crumbs and the yolk of an egg. Good red-fleshed trout, however, require no disguise on being fried, and simple lard or butter is sufficient for the purpose. Trout upwards of half-a-pound in weight ought to be split open by the backbone, and placed flat in the pan, which should previously be well heated over a clear fire, and elevated when the fish are laid on. Small trout and



parr make a delicious dish, if properly fried ; and the addition of a few button mushrooms, freshly gathered from the meadow at the river-side, and cooked in a similar manner along with them, cannot be questioned as an improvement.

**BOILED AND BAKED PIKE.**—Pike and eels are fish not much relished in Scotland, at least on Tweedside. I hold both, however, in high esteem as articles of food. The former, if intended for boiling, ought to be crimped when caught, and treated in the same manner as I have described the salmon to be by Tweed fishermen. A baked pike, with bread stuffing, is excellent, and oysters form a great improvement. The scales, or even the skin, of this fish, ought always to be removed, the flavour resulting therefrom not being the most agreeable. This is done by plotting the pike in hot water, and thoroughly scraping or flaying him. Pike associated with trout, whether taken from a river or loch, are always better tasted than those which feed on eels and frogs.

Angler ! that all day long hast wandered by sunny stream, and heart and hand plied the meditative art, who hast filled thy pannier brimful of star-sided trout, and with aching arms, and weary back, and faint, wavering step, crossed the threshold of some cottage-inn—a smiling rural retreat, that starts up when thy wishes are waning into despondency—how grateful to thee is the merry song of the frying-pan, strewn over with the daintiest of thy spoils, and superintended by a laughter-loving hostess and her blooming image ! And thou, too, slayer of salmon ! more matured and fastidious, what sound, when thy reel is at rest, like the bubbling and frothing of the fish-kettle ?—what fare more acceptable than the shoulder-cut, snowed over with curd, of a gallant sixteen pounder ?—and where in the wide world is to be found wholesomer and heartier sauce, to the one as well as to the other, than a goblet, generously mixed, of Islay, and piping hot ? Stretch thy hand over thy mercies, and be thankful.

## CHAPTER XVI.

## TWEED AND ITS TRIBUTARIES.

OF our Scottish rivers, Tweed unquestionably ranks next to Tay. This stream, as is well known, has its origin fifteen hundred feet above the level of the sea, in a small spring or well situated at the base of a hill, on the confines of Peeblesshire, and within half a mile of the counties of Lanark and Dumfries. From the same hill issue also the Clyde and Annan—the three rivers intersecting the south of Scotland in different directions, and each maintaining the lead, in point of size, over its particular division. The course of the Tweed has been estimated at more than a hundred miles. Its breadth at Kelso is four hundred and forty feet, and it drains an extent of country exceeding sixteen hundred and eighty-seven square miles.

The tribute which Tweed receives, before accomplishing many miles of its course, is indicative of its after amplitude. On one side, it is increased by the Core, the Menzion burn, the Fruid, and the Tala, as well as numerous streams of less magnitude; on the other side, it is supplied by a hundred rills, many of them during summer mere threads of water, but when swollen by melted snows, impassable torrents. A small loch termed Gameshope, abounding in trout, is the source of the principal feeder of Tala. On reaching the Crook Inn, Tweed presents every appearance of being an excellent trouting stream, and, as such, is justly appreciated in its upper as well as its lower districts. Salmon, or rather bull-trout, (there often mistaken, on account of their size, for the true *salar*,) find their way up almost to the sources of the river, and are killed, few indeed by the rod, but in considerable numbers by means

of the spear or leister. The burn-trout are very abundant, but, except in the main river, seldom attain the weight of half-a-pound. After passing Crook, and pursuing its way down to Rachan and Drummelzier, Tweed is joined by the Biggar water—a stream well known to the angler, containing trout of considerable size, and excellent in point of flavour. One of six pounds weight, and beautiful symmetry, was taken in 1852 from this water. Near its junction with the Biggar water, Tweed is six hundred and fifteen feet above the level of the sea. After proceeding seven miles it is entered by the Lyne—a considerable stream, much frequented by the fly-fisher. The Tarth, its tributary, where not injured by cuttings, contains abundance of small trout. During this portion of its course, the main river has descended sixty-five feet. Its average declivity from Tweedsmuir is about twelve feet per mile. After Lyne, Tweed, passing through Peeblesshire, successively receives the Manor water above Neidpath Castle, the Eddleston at Peebles, the Quair at Traquair, Leithen at Innerleithen, not to mention several other petty feeders. All these, more particularly the Manor water, swarm with small trout; while the main river, on the occasion of large floods, is visited, during autumn and winter, by the migratory *salmonidæ*.

It is not however, until it reaches Ashiestiel, several miles below Innerleithen, that Tweed is looked upon by salmon-fishers with much regard. Higher up, the fish killed with the rod are comparatively few, and these, most of them, in execrable condition. It is very seldom that what are termed clean salmon push so far without halt or stay, during which they lose altogether their fine external appearance. Should large floods, however, occur in the months of August, September, and October, they generally bring up to that stretch of water lying betwixt Holy-lee and Caddon-foot a fair sprinkling of grilises. The flies used there are mostly sombre in hue. Hooks dressed in the Irish style are not found nearly so killing. The fishings belong principally to Lord Elibank, Mitchell Innes, Esq. of Stow, Sir James Russel of Ashiestiel, and J. Pringle, Esq. of Torwoodlee. At Cloven-ford, on the Caddon water, about half a mile distant from Tweed, there is an excellent inn, much resorted to by anglers. On the hill

above lies a small lake or pond, stocked with trout. After receiving the Caddon water, the river takes an abrupt bend, and passing below the bridge at Yair, is joined, two miles further down, by the ETTRICK. This stream has its rise on the borders of Dumfriesshire, and occupies a course of about thirty miles. Its principal tributaries are the Timah, Rankle-burn, and Yarrow. Ettrick abounds in nice trout, weighing on the average a quarter of a pound; but I have killed them occasionally, below Thirlestane, upwards of a pound, and recollect seeing one taken there nearly three times that weight. From the burns which empty themselves in the upper districts, I have known my friend, John Wilson, Esq., to capture with the worm twelve dozen in the course of a forenoon. Sea-trout, both of the whitling and bull species, ascend the Ettrick in November, sometimes in great numbers. As many as three score have been slaughtered, by means of the leister, in one night out of a single pool. Salmon also show a strong propensity to frequent its waters. The lets hitherto in their way of doing so have been numerous; but his Grace the Duke of Buccleuch is making laudable exertions to remove them. Poaching also with the spear is strictly suppressed on this portion of his vast estates. Were he to mark as strongly his disapprobation of it in another quarter, a great benefit would be conferred upon the angling community.

YARROW enters Ettrick a short way above Selkirk. It proceeds from St Mary's Loch, the upper part of which is situated nineteen miles from the town referred to. As an angling stream it is in good repute, and contains nice trout, weighing from one and a half pound downwards. Near the loch the average is about half a pound, and I have frequently taken two or three dozen of that weight. The woodcock wing and mouse-fur body form a favourite fly. Minnow, also, during summer, is highly attractive in some of the streams. The lower parts of the Yarrow are strictly preserved, but it is open above Broadmeadows. In Douglas burn, one of its feeders, are numbers of small trout; and it is remarkable that in winter this insignificant stream is the choice retreat, for spawning purposes, of salmon and sea-trout. These, of course, are seldom permitted to conclude their operations undisturbed, but

become, whenever an opportunity offers, the prize of the poacher, whose merciless spear is in most frequent operation during the fence season, when fish are out of condition.

ST MARY'S LOCH, from which Yarrow makes its escape, is well stocked with trout, averaging in weight half a pound. I have often, however, killed them a great deal heavier, and recollect on the Bourhope side encreeeling a yellow trout that measured nearly twenty inches in length. Such an occurrence, however, is extremely rare. Besides trout, St Mary's Loch contains pike and perch : the former, of late, are much on the increase. Twenty years ago, when I first angled in Selkirkshire, this rapacious fish was confined in a great measure to the Loch of the Lowes, a sheet of water lying immediately above the other, and connected with it by a stream not fifty yards in length. At that period no trout frequented the upper lake. They are now met with on its south side in considerable abundance, and of a size and quality superior to those found in St Mary's. In an edible point of view, the pike of the above lochs are very superior to the fish of this description generally met with, and attain to a great size. I recollect killing one that weighed nineteen pounds. My implement was a small trouting-rod, and when I brought the fish to bank, there was only a strand composed of three horse-hairs left near the hook to support him, the other two strands of the winch-line having given way. St Mary's Loch is in length about three miles. Its breadth is about half a mile. The Loch of the Lowes extends nearly a mile.

Discharging themselves into these lochs are several streams, the largest of which is the Meggat water, an excellent summer trouting river, where I have caught fish upwards of two pounds in weight. At the foot of Meggat, close to where it enters St Mary's Loch, I recollect, on the occasion of a flood, killing with the fly three panniers-ful of trout, each containing a stone-weight and upwards, in the course of a day. Another large capture made by me on this stream took place while in company with the Ettrick Shepherd, and the creel-fuls we respectively emptied out on arriving at Henderland (we had fished down during a small flood from the head of Winterhope burn, a course of

four or five miles) would have astonished even a Tweed-side adept.

The Chapelhope burns and Corse-cleugh, which enter the Loch of the Lowes, also contain numerous trout. There are plenty of perch in the upper lake, and the lower one is occasionally visited by salmon and bull-trout. I have caught both of these fish with loch-flies from the margin, but never met with one in edible condition. There is excellent accommodation at Mrs Richardson's (Tibby Shiels) cottage, situated betwixt the two lakes, the rooms being fitted up expressly for anglers. The house is not an inn, but wine and spirits may be obtained from Moffat or Selkirk, at a short notice, carriers passing, not far off, several time during the week. The landlady will be found extremely attentive and obliging. There is an inn on Yarrow—the Gordon Arms—nearly opposite Altrive, the residence of the late Ettrick Shepherd; and two—the Tushielaw Inn, and Ettrick-bridge ditto—between Selkirk and Thirlestane, on the Ettrick.

On the high grounds, betwixt where the Rankle burn discharges itself into the Ettrick and the sources of the Ale water, a tributary of Teviot, are situated several lochs, the largest of which are Clear burn, the Shaws loch, and Alemoor. Clear burn abounds in nice trout, averaging half a pound in weight. The others contain pike and perch, and one or two of them good trout. They are not much angled in, lying as they do out of the usual track.

Reverting to Tweedside, there are two or three stretches of water occupied as rod-fishings for salmon, not far from where the Ettrick enters the main river. Those above its junction are the Yair fishings, belonging to Alexander Pringle, Esq. of Whythank, and further down the Faldonside, Bold-side, and Abbotsford waters, (John Scott, Esq. of Gala House.) The Yair fishings are at present held on lease by a large party of gentlemen, chiefly from Edinburgh. During the three weeks that precede close-time, should a flood occur, on the removal of the nets, the sport met with in this quarter is sometimes excellent. Kelts also are killed here, in the spring, in considerable numbers; but throughout the greater part of the open season the salmon-fishing is generally very indifferent, and depends entirely upon the state of the river.

Not far from Abbotsford, on the opposite side of Tweed, the Gala water effects its junction. From the mouth up to the town of Galashiels, about two miles distant, the bed of this stream is one unseemly ditch blackened with dyes, and containing refuse of various descriptions. Above Galashiels, a branch line of the North British Railway has, of late years, seriously injured the angling on this once celebrated stream. At Torwoodlee, however, there are still some good casts containing trout of respectable dimensions. Some of the feeders of Gala also, for instance Heriot water, abound in small trout. There is a small loch termed Cauldshiels, on the Abbotsford estate, containing perch.

A little below Galashiels is situated, on the main river, the Pavilion or Melrose water, extending from the mouth of the Gala, as far as the bridge at Melrose or thereabouts. The salmon-fishings on this stretch of Tweed belong to Lord Somerville, and are at present rented by Henry F. Broadwood, Esq. Many of the casts are excellent, and, after a succession of autumnal floods, abound in grilse.

Next to Lord Somerville's fishings follow those of Thomas Tod, Esq. of Drygrange, which terminate at the bridge near Leader-foot. They were let recently to one of the Purdies, well-known fishermen in that district, and are held in good esteem by anglers. The LEADER is an excellent trouting water, but the fish are not large, few exceeding a pound in weight. There are several comfortable inns on its banks,—one near the head, at Carfrae-mill, another at Lauder, and a third at the beautiful village of Earlstoun.

Below Leader bridge the salmon-fishings on Tweed, as far down as Dryburgh, are connected with different properties on the bank of the river. Gladswood, Old Melrose, Bemersyde—each asserts its claim to a separate stretch of water; and under these are the Dryburgh fishings and those belonging to the heirs of the late Mrs Riddell; also a cast or two, lately under dispute, near Lessuden, the proprietorship of which has been determined to rest with Sir W. Fairfax and the Misses Williamson Ramsay. In all these stretches of water, which taken together extend about four or five miles, the rod-fishings for salmon are of a superior character. The river runs at a tolerably rapid

pace, and takes several abrupt-bends or turns. These are favourable to the formation of good salmon-casts, especially in such a channel or *alveus* as that which Tweed possesses, during the greater part of its course. The trouting here is also of a first-rate description.

A little way below Dryburgh, the Mertoun fishings, belonging to Lord Polwarth, commence. They extend two miles, and are then, on the south side, joined below Little-dean Tower, by the Rutherford water, belonging to Sir Edward Antrobus, Bart., and held on lease by Professor Low of Edinburgh, and John Spottiswoode, Esq., London. The Rutherford water forms the commencement of a series of the best rod-fishings for salmon in Great Britain, and as such, along with the streams that succeed it, deserves particular notice. It consists of a succession of casts or pools of various characters — one still and lake-like, another rugged and shallow, a third combining tranquillity with swiftness, and a fourth depth with considerable turbulence. These casts, of course, have all their separate names, descriptive, generally speaking, of their external features, or the uses they are put to. The highest up are the Corse-heugh and Lang-stream, at the foot of which there is a ferry-house inhabited by the fisherman or bailiff of the water, John Aitkin, and containing accommodation for the lessee and his friends during the fishing season. Connected with the Lang-stream is the Dub or Cauld-pool, occupying a great extent of channel—more so, perhaps, than any other pool in Tweed previous to its junction with the Teviot. This is the favourite resort or refuge-place of kelts while undergoing the process of mending, and during their descent from the upper parts of the river. In 1846, a short time after the expiring of the fence season, no fewer than thirty-seven of these fish were captured in a single day by two gentlemen in this stretch of the river. Below the Cauld-pool lie the Mill-stream, the Damfoot, the Corbie's-nest, and the Clippers, all excellent salmon-casts.

The trouting on the Rutherford water is superior to any in Tweed. I recollect my friend, John Wilson, Esq., capturing with the minnow a creelful of fish, out of one or two of the pools, among which at least a dozen and a half exceeded in weight one and a half pounds each, and as many more were full pounders. I have more than once



taken trout there with the parr-tail that weighed well on to three pounds.

As an additional proof of its superiority, as well as the esteem it is held in by anglers on Tweedside, I may mention that the majority of the successful competitors belonging to the Teviotdale Fishing Club have achieved their triumphs within its confines, and that the panniers produced on the occasion of their club meetings from this portion of Tweed, have generally excited admiration on account of the size and beauty of the trout contained in them.

Below the Clippers of Rutherford water, commences the Makerston range. The salmon-fishings here belong to two proprietors—those on the north side of Tweed to Sir Thomas Makdougall Brisbane, Bart., and those on the south, to his Grace the Duke of Roxburghe. They were, until lately, rented for a small sum by Robert Kerss, or, as he was familiarly termed, Rob of Trows. There breathed not a finer specimen of his class on Tweedside than our old friend Rob—one that never had an enemy of his own making nor cringed to form his friendships—the same in his courtesy to anglers of all ranks and degrees, to a beggar as to a duke. As a rod-fisher for salmon, Rob Kerss had few equals, and, in all matters regarding fishing, was enthusiastic beyond measure. To have been in the boat with him, when the fish were in taking humour, was a treat well worth the paying for. He never grudged the escape of a fish, and had always an encouraging or original remark at hand to keep up the spirit of the amusement—too often, as regards salmon-fishing, apt to flag or die away. The salmon-fishings of Makerston, a short time previous to the demise of Robert Kerss, were subjected by those interested in them to a new arrangement, and are at present held on lease by the Duke of Buccleuch and Lord John Scott.

The Makerston water consists of the following casts, which occupy about two miles of the river; Willie's bank, Hirple Nelly, the Orchard-heads opposite Makerston house, the Dark Shore, the Clippers, north and south, the Laird's Cast, Elshie stream, Shot, Red Stane, Side Straik, Doors, Nethern heads, Willie's Ower fa', and passing over some highly impetuous water, the Kill-mouth pool. From the Red Stane downwards, the Tweed is confined betwixt walls

of rock, and hurries along with rapid violence. The name given to that portion of the river is the Trows crags—the word “*trows*” being the Scotch for troughs, of which vessels, two joined together at one end, used to be employed instead of a boat, for the spearing of salmon. I recollect seeing a pair of them not long since at the village of Denholm, betwixt Jedburgh and Hawick, which had frequently been put to the test, in night-leistering on Teviot. They consisted of the wooden receptacles, or something of the like construction, out of which cattle are fed, and were so joined that the one formed a sharp angle with the other. In using them, the spearsman kept his legs astride, a foot being placed in each trough, and struck at the fish, through the space formed by the angle.

I have elsewhere spoken of the Red Stane and its attractive powers, as a stronghold for salmon; never, in fact, from one end of the year to the other, does it want its occupants: sometimes, in the months of August and September, it is crowded with salmon and grilises which, when the river is low, were wont to be driven into nets or slaughtered with the sanguinary leister. The Nethern heads also form a famous resort for large salmon, and many is the woeful face mirrored by shining Tweed above this cast, when down, at the rate of a racehorse in full speed, rushes the aroused fish, snapping, like the touch of fire, the tackle of the angler, and carrying with him the daintiest fly that the fingers of Forrest ever put wing to—all, bitt and harness, with high hopes and stirring fancies, into the abysses beneath.

A little way from Kill-mouth, the lowermost stream of the Makerston range, is situated, on a bank among trees, the cottage lately occupied by our lamented friend, Robert Kerss.

Below the pool at Kill-mouth commences the Floors water, belonging to his Grace the Duke of Roxburghe. This nobleman possesses the most valuable rod-fishings for salmon on Tweedside, and the largest range of water in the district. On the south side of the river, his right of salmon-fishing extends from the Rutherford water to Carham burn, in the county of Northumberland, a distance of nine or ten miles; not including Teviot, where he has property of the same nature, from its junction upwards over a con-

siderable tract of river ground. On the north side, his fishings range from the boundary wall at Kill-mouth, along the policies of Floors, to about a mile below Kelso, a stretch of nearly four miles.

His Grace is a most enthusiastic and efficient salmon-fisher, and the feats he has frequently achieved are unsurpassed by those of any living angler in Great Britain. It was, before the late years of scarcity occurred, a matter of not uncommon occurrence for him to kill with the rod betwixt twenty and thirty fish, salmon and grilse, in the course of the day, on the Floors stretch of water alone. He has recently much improved the fishing capabilities of this range of Tweed, both by constructing dykes, in order to form pools, and by adding large stones to the channel of the river, so as to induce the salmon to remain within the precincts of the estate. The casts on the Floors water are as follows—the Slates, Blackstane, Weetles, Huddles, Shot, (recently improved and formed into a sort of cauld or dam,) Hedge-end, Shirt-stream, Skelly rock, Coach Wynd, Income, Cobby-hole, Putt, Back Bullers, Maxwheel. Immediately below the Back Bullers, the junction of Tweed and Teviot, unquestionably a meeting of waters unsurpassed by any in the United Kingdom takes place. His Grace's fishings in this quarter are under the superintendence of Mr Stevenson, who has liberty to construct cairns in certain places, for the purpose of netting salmon, and who takes charge of the angling boats, &c.

Immediately below Kelso commence the Sprouston fishings, rented, along with the ferry, a couple of miles down the river, by Thomas Kerss, a relative of Old Rob's at Trows, for about seventy pounds per annum. These, in connection with the salmon-casts belonging to John Waldie, Esq. of Hendersyde Park, embrace the following streams and pools, Hempside Ford, the Bank, the Grain, Winter Cast, Mill-stream, Mill-pot, Butterwash, Bushes, Scurry (containing the well-known Prison-rock,) Dub, Mill-end, Falls, Eden-water-foot. Mr Waldie's fishings begin at the Mill-stream and terminate at Eden mouth. They are at present held on lease by Charles Balfour, Esq. of Newton-Don, and party.

The casts above mentioned are, one and all, excellent, and contain a great variety of water. Sprouston Dub is of

large extent, and forms generally, in the event of a breeze, the afternoon heat. During September and October, it is generally well stocked with salmon, and, indeed, at no season of the year wants fish of this description. It has been conjectured, by those competent to judge, that in this pool alone there are often congregated, at the same time, a thousand salmon and grilises. I have witnessed five or six good fish, not kelts, taken out here, in the course of little more than half an hour—as fast, in fact, as they could be hooked and played to hank. The fisherman, Thomas Keress, employed on the Hendersyde water, is nephew to the tacksman at Sprouston. At Birgham, Carham, Wark, Lees, and Tweed Mill, a family of Scotts hold rule; and about Melrose, in the upper waters, are several Purdies, a name which the author of Waverley has made celebrated.

Before descending Tweed to the Birgham water, I shall recur for a single moment to its principal tributary, Teviot. This stream, in its trouting capacity, is well worth the attention of the angler. It is not, however, one where sport is at all certain, or where the fish are at any time to be captured without skill. They are more shy and moody, in fact, than in most rivers, and require, in order to allure them, the finest tackle, and a particular size and colour of fly. Dark hackles, or dun-coloured dubbings, are irresistible; but the hook these are fitted to must agree in magnitude with the condition of water and season of the year, in order to do much execution, and induce large trout to take it.

The TEVIOT has its sources at Teviot stone, on the heights which separate Dumfriesshire from Roxburghshire. The length of its channel is upwards of forty miles. It receives a great number of tributaries. Those near its head are the Lymy-cleugh and Frostly burns, the Allan and Borthwick waters, after which it is increased by the Slitrigg, the Rule, the Ale, the Jed, the Oxnam, and the Kale. Of these, the last-mentioned stream is in best repute among anglers. Some years ago, in the neighbourhood of Hownam, ten or eleven miles from Kelso, my friend Mr Wilson and myself captured betwixt us thirty-six dozen trout in the course of a day. In the Jed water, trout of excellent quality and respectable dimensions abound; but the wooded state of its banks

renders fly-fishing a very laborious pursuit. With the worm, however, during the summer months, an experienced hand may readily fill his pannier. The Jed trout are pink-fleshed, and well flavoured in point of taste. Ale is a good angling stream; and so, naturally, are the other tributaries of Teviot; but of late years they have all been much harassed by poachers, whose practices the Earl of Minto's Act has not yet succeeded in putting a stop to. I regret, indeed, to say that this trifling piece of legislation has proved in its effects very injurious to the angling community at large. In addition to the gangs of common poachers—to repress which, by virtue of its provisions, has been found impracticable—it has raised up, in the shape of proprietors, their friends, and gamekeepers, a host of licensed net-fishers; parties who previously doubted their right, and with no small reason, to sweep from head to foot, using an undersized mesh, this or that pool or stream belonging to a large public river—like Tweed or Teviot—but now, without hesitation, can point to the Act in question as their authority for so doing. I am not alluding to supposititious cases, or what is likely to occur in consequence of the passing of this enactment, but to the results which have actually accrued from it; and were I so disposed, I could instance more than one proceeding partaking of the nature of a wholesale butchery, where the parties engaged would, under the Tweed Fishery Act, have rendered themselves liable to severe penalties, had not the provisions of that more important measure become to some extent superseded. The best portion of Teviot, for angling in, lies undoubtedly betwixt Ormiston and Sunlaws mills. I have killed, upon the whole, larger and finer trout in that stretch of water than anywhere else; and on a favourable day, with minnow or worm, it is of common occurrence to take several upwards of a pound-weight each.

The rod-fishings for salmon on this river are very precarious; but, with perseverance, one may manage to capture a good many fish in the course of a season, using the duller varieties of Tweed flies, and making himself well acquainted with the several casts. Here, as on the main river, more salmon are slaughtered by means of the leister than the rod. I do not allude to the practices

of poachers in close time—which, as respects the killing of salmon, are often ridiculously magnified—but the open, vaunted-of destruction which takes place throughout the rest of the year, whenever the low state of the river will admit of its being resorted to. At Kirkbank, for instance, as many fish are sometimes killed in this way in a single night, as would suffice to exercise the ingenuity and encourage the perseverance of twenty honest anglers throughout the season. A fishing club was lately organised in the lower districts of Teviotdale, under the name of the Teviotdale Angling Club. It comprises upwards of seventy members, and four medals are competed for during the course of the season. These are purely honorary prizes; but as a further encouragement to competition, a sweepstakes or two is generally entered into at each meeting, and the produce expended on a rod, reel, or other fishing gear, to be given to the successful candidate. The produce of the winning creels has on several occasions exceeded seventeen pounds in weight, and trout of two pounds each have frequently been exhibited at the meetings which take place—one in May, at Jedburgh and Kelso alternately, and the other in July, under cover of a marquee by the water-side. The hours of competition are of course limited, not exceeding six during the fly-season, and eight in the summer contest.

About three miles below Kelso, the Eden, a small rivulet, but held in good repute by the angler, enters Tweed. I have already alluded, in the body of this volume, to the superior quality of its trout, which are red-fleshed, and deep in the shape. There is a fall on this stream at Newton-Don, below which the true breed of Eden is intermixed with other varieties. May and June are the months when the Eden trout are in highest perfection, and the worm at this period is a deadly bait. The largest trout I ever killed in Eden weighed above two pounds; and I have frequently taken, among others, a dozen, weighing a pound a-piece. Of late years the fish have greatly decreased in size; but their quality, when in season, is still good.

The Birgham fishings on Tweed commence about half a mile below Eden-mouth, and comprise, along with the Carham water, a number of excellent pools and angling

casts, the principal of which are Birgham Dub, containing Burn-mouth, Corbie-nest, Galashan, Jean-my-lady, Cork Stane, after which follow the Burn-stream, Carham-wheel, including Cuddy's-hole, Dyke-end, Long-ship-end, Mid-channel-stream, Flummery, Kirk-end, Dritten-ass, Glitters, Bloody-breeks, Under-cairn, the Caldron-hole, Three-stanes, Pikey, Three-brethren, Nether-stream, the Hole-stream, the Hole, Craw-stanes, Lang-craig, Mark's-skelley-head, Bell-stane, Segg-bush, White-eddy, Whinbush-skelley, Shaw's-mare, Know-head.

The casts in the Wark water, belonging to the Earl of Tankerville, are the Snipe, the Brae, the Dub, Anna-edge, Cuddy's-hole, Skellie-rocks, Willow-bush, Island-neb, Black-mark, Fa'en-down-brae, Hedge-end, Red-heugh-stane, Hell's-hole, Mid-hole, Temple, Cauld-end, Coble-neb, Coble-hole, Bulwark. The fishings on the north side of the river belong to the Earl of Home; those on the south, below Carham burn, to the Compton family, Carham Hall. Succeeding these are the Wark fishings; and farther down, the Lees water. This range of river extends nearly to Coldstream, where the Leet, an insignificant stream, but containing trout of considerable size and very superior flavour, discharges itself. The Leet passes through the Hirsell grounds, seat of the Earl of Home, where there is a fish-pond. In the *New Statistical Account* it is stated that the late earl, who perhaps killed more salmon with the rod than any angler of his day, captured one in Tweed of the extraordinary weight of fifty pounds; it is also affirmed that pike have been taken out of the Hirsell loch weighing thirty-two pounds. At Coldstream bridge there is a good cast, which seldom wants its fish, and where, in the grilse season, when the river is clear, one has an excellent opportunity of studying the habits and likings of the salmon in fresh water, what fly is most attractive, &c. &c. The trouting about Coldstream is very superior, but the rod-fishings for salmon, with the exception of the cast above mentioned, are somewhat precarious. Three miles below Coldstream stands Tweed-mill, nearly opposite which the Till enters.

Although not a Scottish river, yet, as one of the tributaries of Tweed, and fed in part by Scottish springs, the Till merits a single moment's attention. It is a deep

sluggish water, singularly fantastic in its windings. The fish it contains are pike, perch, trout, and eels; but the migratory sorts, especially whitlings, enter it freely, and much earlier than they do any other branch from the main stream. Not many salmon, however, are caught by the rod above Etal, their progress being much obstructed by a waterfall in that locality. The sea-trout, on the occurrence of a flood, force their way up into the Glen, a stream entering Till two or three miles below Wooler, and formed by the junction of the Bowmont and Colledge waters—the one passing Yetholm from Roxburghshire, and the other from the foot of Cheviot. The Glen is in high repute as an angling stream, and contains abundance of small lively trout. There are good inns at and adjoining Wooler, and a small one at Bender.

On the Tweed, at Till-mouth, there is an excellent cast for salmon; but here, as at Coldstream, the fish are very capricious, and show little inclination to favour the angler. The salmon-fishings betwixt Carham and Berwick belong to various proprietors, among which are the Earl of Tankerville; — Collingwood, Esq.; Sir F. Blake; — Wilson, Esq.; Lord Crew's Trustees; Mrs Shuttleworth; George Smith, Esq.; John Grey, Esq.; Berwick Shipping Company, Berwick Corporation, Duke of Northumberland, Dean and Chapter of Durham, &c. &c., on the English side of the river;—and on the Scottish, Sir J. Marjoribanks; Earl of Haddington; D. Robertson, Esq.; D. Milne Home, Esq.; — Macbraire, Esq.; Sir George Houston Boswell; Richard Ellison, Esq., &c. &c.

About five miles above Berwick, the Tweed is joined by the Whitadder.

The WHITADDER takes its rise at Johnscleugh, in the county of Haddington, at an elevation of eleven hundred and fifty feet above the level of the sea. After running three miles, it is joined by the Fasseneys water at Mill-know. It afterwards, a short way above Ellemford, receives the Dye, with its tributary the Watch-burn; and, on reaching Allanton, is augmented from the West by the Blackadder. Both the main stream and its tributaries abound in trout—in point of numbers, perhaps, there are few rivers in Scotland that surpass them; and the Blackadder, which has its sources at Wedderlie, nineteen miles



distant from its junction with Whitadder, is in high repute for the size and excellence of its fish. They resemble, in some respects, the trout of Eden, and when in season are red-fleshed. Sea-trout, it is said, do not ascend the Blackadder, but take freely to the channels of its fairer sister.

One of the oldest and largest fishing-clubs in Scotland (the Ellem) is connected with the Whitadder, and takes its name from an angling station on this river. It originated in 1827 or 1828. A handsome rod and reel form the leading prize, and are annually contested for on the first or second week of May. There is also a medal given by George Trotter Cranstoun, Esq., to be held by the captor of the best dozen of river trout; the rod, along with an honorary medal, the property of the club, being awarded for the greatest weight. The Ellem fishing-club is under the control of a council and secretary, J. Turnbull, Esq., to whose judicious management, and that of his predecessor, the late A. Low, Esq., it owes much of its prosperity.

The best stations for anglers on the Whitadder and Blackadder rivers are Longformacus Inn, at the junction of the Dye and Watch; Ellemford Inn, six miles from Dunse, and Allanton, at the junction of the Whitadder and Blackadder.

With regard to the salmon-fishings of Tweed, I am indebted to various sources for the annexed particulars. The rental of the whole river and sea-side fisheries may be estimated at about £6000 per annum. This amount includes what is drawn from the rod-fishings, a description of property that, to a great extent, may be set down as fictitious. I am correctly informed when I state that the cost of each fish, good, bad, or indifferent, taken throughout the season by parties leasing the angling on the river, has, during late years, exceeded £2, the matter of rent alone being considered. When boats, attendance, watching, tackle, and other expenses are added, this sum becomes greatly increased, and some idea may be formed of the consideration in which the sport of salmon-fishing is held on Tweedside. Were all the rod-fishings on the river disposed of at the rate of value set upon them by anglers, the rent drawn from those alone would, there is no question, approach that which is commanded by the whole of the netting grounds at the mouth of the river. Many of

the best fishings, however, of this description, are retained in the hands of the proprietors.

In comparing the state of the salmon-fishings on Tweed forty or fifty years ago with their present condition, we cannot help being struck with the disproportion as to rents, &c., betwixt the two periods. The number of boxes of salmon shipped from Berwick to London in 1804 amounted to 13,000. In 1807 the annual rent of the Tweed fishings amounted to £15,766. The number of boxes sent to London was 8445. In 1814 the rental of the river was as high as £20,000. In 1823 it had fallen to £10,000, the average number of boxes shipped exceeding 8000. On one or two years—in 1816 for instance—it extended to 11,000.

The rents now paid for the river and sea-side fisheries, irrespective of the angling, do not much exceed £5000. In 1846, the assessment from Eden-mouth, about three miles below Kelso, downwards, was made upon a rental of £5358, 2s. The average number of boxes of salmon sent to London, for the ten years previous to 1846, amounted to 4610, the local consumption ranging from 200 to 300 boxes, each box containing about ten stone-weight of fish.

The following table, extracted from a late number of the *Edinburgh Review*, supplies a tolerably accurate account of the proceeds of the Tweed fisheries during the forty years which preceded 1851:—

TABLE

## PRODUCE OF SALMON-FISHINGS FROM 1811 TO 1850.

	Salmon.	Grilises.	Trouts.	All kinds.
1811 to 1815. Quinquennial Totals, . Annual Averages, .	201,484 40,297	340,288 68,057	156,176 31,235	697,948 139,589
1816 to 1820. Quinquennial Totals, . Annual Averages, .	189,690 37,938	435,444 87,089	245,391 49,078	870,525 174,105
1821 to 1825. Quinquennial Totals, . Annual Averages, .	114,550 22,938	283,238 57,647	312,378 62,475	715,266 143,052
1826 to 1830. Quinquennial Totals, . Annual Averages, .	49,020 9,804	279,950 55,990	244,320 48,864	537,290 114,658
1831 to 1835. Quinquennial Totals, . Annual Averages, .	72,082 14,416	325,563 65,112	345,604 69,121	743,249 148,649
1836 to 1840. Quinquennial Totals, . Annual Averages, .	70,746 14,149	261,418 52,283	274,384 54,877	606,549 121,309
1841 to 1845. Quinquennial Totals, . Annual Averages, .	94,231 18,846	405,237 81,047	348,563 69,712	848,031 169,605
1846 to 1850. Quinquennial Totals, . Annual Averages, .	55,372 11,054	274,088 54,817	246,441 49,288	575,901 115,159

The numbers of fish taken at the Berwick Shipping Company's netting stations during the last five years are as follows. I may mention that the produce of the Company's fishings are estimated at about two-thirds of the produce of the whole river.

	Salmon.	Grilises.	Trouts.
1848, . .	5,376	51,925	29,754
1849, . .	6,468	30,504	23,456
1850, . .	5,766	20,230	30,257
1851, . .	6,387	11,327	30,572
1852, . .	4,237	18,762	16,133

The fluctuations to which property in salmon-fishings stands exposed, are curiously revealed in the above lists ;

one of the most singular features of which is the decrease of the *salar*, or true salmon, taken into connection with the increase of the *eriox*, or bull-trout; for it is this species of the *salmonidæ*, more than the whitling or sea-trout of the north, that is comprehended, at least of late years, under the term "trouts." Whitlings, it is true, fall under that designation, but they are a scarcer fish, by many degrees, than the *eriores*, in the Border river.

Of bull-trouts, the numbers captured, or rather destroyed, on Tweed and its tributaries, during close time, are beyond computation, whole cart-loads of these fish being sometimes taken, in the course of a single night, from a comparatively short stretch of water. I have seen boys of ten or twelve years of age, at the sources of Teviot, laden with fish of five or six pounds weight, which they had transfixed in open daylight, with the assistance of no other implement than a potato fork or "graipe." Several of the pools, indeed, where these massacres are carried on, become, on the subsiding of a casual flood, so narrow, as scarcely to admit of the fish wheeling about; others so shallow, as hardly to cover the back fins. Accordingly, to capture them when the streams are in this reduced state, requires a very indifferent amount of skill. The fish thus taken in these smaller tributaries are, it must be admitted, with few exceptions, of the bull-trout species; and it is very questionable whether or not the protection of such, during the spawning season, efficiently carried out, (which at present it is not,) would benefit the Tweed fisheries at large.

The salmon-fishings of Tweed, under the operations of the present fishery acts, (the 11th of George IV. c. 54, and 6th Gul. IV. c. 65,) cannot be said to have improved to the extent at one time anticipated. I may mention, however, that the produce of the ten seasons terminating in 1846 considerably exceeded that of the ten preceding years. The year 1846 was remarkable for the scarcity of grilse; but salmon, during the summer months, and these exceeding the ordinary size, were more than usually plentiful. In 1847, the grilse crop was rather below average, and the fish remarkably small-sized. In 1848, the supply of these fish was very abundant, and no complaint made as to the size, many of them caught in July weighing upwards of six pounds. The succeeding season was one

of note in our northern rivers, as regards the grilse; but owing to the want of rain, and freshets on Tweedside, the Border river, near Berwick, cannot be said to have yielded, on the whole, more than an average crop of fish. Some of the captures, however, were large, and worthy of mention. At the Sandstell station, for instance, on the last week of July, in the course of one tide, there were taken six hundred and fifty fish. Two successive hauls of the net, at this station, secured no fewer than a hundred and twenty salmon and grilse. Several of the latter, caught in July, weighed nearly eight pounds—a great weight for Tweed grilse during that month.

The years 1850 and 1851 (I may also add 1852) were, without question, among the worst on record, as regards salmon-fishings, throughout the island; our Border river, notwithstanding its peculiar system of regulations, sharing in the general dearth. This scarcity of salmon and grilse in our British streams has been imputed to various causes. I have heard remarks made upon it, and reasons assigned for it, from at least a dozen quarters. In the north-west coast of Scotland, it was considered as a catastrophe brought about by the mode of fishing with bag-nets, cruives, &c. On Tweedside, it was attributed by some to the extensive drainage carried on along the banks of the river and its tributaries, the effect of which, in the event of a summer flood, is to render the water impure and distasteful; and on the occurrence of winter *spates*, to break up the spawning-beds, and injure the infant fry. Some again, in the same quarter, ascribed the failure in question to a deficiency of smolts, caused by the depredations of poachers in the preceding close-time; others, to the increase of bull-trout; and a few, to the erection (commenced in 1847 and completed in 1850) of the railway bridge at Tweedmouth. The presence of the tunny, porpoise, and other large fish, on the coasts, was also surmised as the cause of the scarcity in some localities; besides which, conjectures were hazarded relative to the migrations of the species, and it was affirmed that unprecedentedly large bodies of salmon, the produce of our British rivers, had made their appearance in Newfoundland. In conjunction with some of these alleged causes of failure, it has been predicted that a scarcity of the salmon will continue to prevail (aggravated possibly by a further

diminution of the breed) as long as matters remain in *statu quo*, and no remedy is undertaken to be applied, through the intervention of parties interested, by the legislature.

All the abuses and detrimental causes enumerated, although they may with truth be severally brought forward to account for a gradual decrease of the salmon breed in this or that locality, are not sufficient, however, to explain the general failure of 1850 ; a failure which extended, not only to the British and Irish rivers, but to those of Norway and other parts of the Continent. But although so extraordinary a deficit is to be attributed to causes at present beyond our powers of intelligence, and may be made up as mysteriously and unexpectedly on a future season, this is no hindrance to us in dealing with those abuses, and that wrongous system of legislation, to which can be traced undeniably a gradual falling off in the produce of our salmon streams.

As regards Tweed, there is no river in Scotland where so many of these abuses hold sway, and where so much of that wrongous legislation prevails ; and the fact that, in spite of such drawbacks, it still maintains its celebrity as a salmon-river, only makes it the more desirable that full justice should be done to it, and that its facilities for affording an ample supply of fish should be fairly and properly put to the test.

As a primary step towards securing the protection of the *salar* or salmon proper, I beg to suggest, that a distinction should be drawn betwixt it and all the inferior species. These, in the Tweed Fishery Act, are bundled up together with the true salmon, as if they were of equal value, and their destruction, while spawning, a matter of equal regret. Were a proper investigation made of the main river and its tributaries, during the breeding season, it would be found that the distinction which I propose should be considered to exist betwixt the various species, not only holds good, in respect to what naturalists have restricted it to, but that it is further exemplified by the fish themselves, in the choice of their spawning-grounds and fresh-water resorts. In this respect, a line of separation may be said to have its place, although not yet sought out and registered, betwixt the breeding-grounds of the salmon and those of the sea-

trout. I do not assert, as regards Tweed or any one of its feeders, that the line I speak of is a definite one, and may be accurately laid down, regardless of the season, the state of the river and its channel, and the proportion, in point of numbers, which the different species happen to bear one to the other. To some extent, all these circumstances must influence its position; but that they do so in a limited measure, I have every reason to believe. When made themselves subjects of calculation, they assist rather to determine this line of demarcation than otherwise. In order to illustrate the matter, I shall fix upon a river, say the principal tributary of Tweed,—Teviot, which is resorted to both by salmon and sea-trout for the purpose of breeding. The latter description of fish, it is well known, penetrates to the fountain-heads of the water. They enter all its feeders,—the Kale, Oxnam, Jed, Ale, Rule, and Borthwick, and distribute themselves through the course and subsidiaries of those streams. Not so the true *salar*. I question much if a single individual of this species has, for many years back, been captured in the main river by the rod, above Chesters. With the net and leister, in winter, beyond that point, as far up possibly as Denholm, salmon are no doubt taken in considerable numbers. In the neighbourhood of that village, however, I would be inclined to look out for the *terminus* to their migrations, and there, without respect to the circumstance that a straggler or two is occasionally captured higher up, draw the line of separation in question. The river thus divided—that is, the resorts of the *salar* separated from those of the sea-trout—the watching of spawning-beds during the fence season, hitherto, on account of the great space thought proper to be guarded, a matter of cost and difficulty, may be carried out by the application of a moderate sum, and with a degree of facility, up to this date, considered unattainable. Ascertain the principal spawning-grounds of the salmon proper, restrict to these the walk and watching of your protective force, and throw what remains into the hands of the angling community, to be dealt with as they think proper; and you—I speak to the proprietors of salmon-fishings on Tweedside—will not only do much towards the preservation of the breed at a reduced cost, but by this measure act a conciliatory part towards those who at present harass the

spawning-beds with net and leister, and induce them; on such portions of the river as are left open, to substitute the rod in lieu of other implements of destruction.

To do Tweed and its salmon-fishings, however, full justice, I would further suggest that some arrangement be made betwixt the proprietors in the neighbourhood of Berwick and those higher up, by which the breeding and rearing of the fry may be carried on in artificial ponds or reservoirs constructed to suit the purpose, at convenient distances along the banks of the river. Were such reservoirs formed—and this could be done at a small expense, on the plan of the Drumlanrig ponds—by many of the parties interested in the Tweed fishings, the stocking of them from year to year with abundance of fry might be effected with comparatively little trouble. An occasional sweep of the trawl-net in the breeding season, made by authorised persons, over a stretch of well-reputed spawning-ground, would command, without doing any sensible injury to the river stock, a supply of ripe baggits and milsters sufficient to provide impregnated ova for half-a-dozen such reservoirs. Of the advantages which might with reason be expected to result from this mode of breeding and rearing a salmon stock, I need scarcely speak. Were such auxiliaries to the natural spawning-grounds instituted in sufficient numbers, all of them being properly watched and taken care of, not only might a vast accession be annually administered, on proper occasions, to the body of descending smolts bred in the river and its tributaries, but if, from some cause or another—such as the violation of the spawning-beds previous to vivifaction by a winter flood—this body should happen to be a small one, its deficiency in numbers could at once be supplied, and a failure in the grilse crop, to a certain extent, provided against. In such ponds, the risks attendant on the hatching of the deposit might, with a little attention, be completely obviated; it would be easy to protect both spawn and fry from the attacks of their natural enemies—trout, waterfowl, &c.; and this further advantage would accrue, that the smolts could be detained in them, not only until a favourable opportunity occurs of their passing unmolested to the sea, but, if thought expedient, for a season or two beyond the usual term of their stay in fresh water. Were a score or two of such nurseries con-



structed in connection with Tweed and its tributaries, incalculable benefit would, I am of opinion, be done to the salmon-fishings. At Lees, Wark, Birgham, Floors, Makerston, Rutherford, Mertoun, &c., up as high as Peebles, a little way above which I would draw the line of separation already spoken of, such reservoirs might be constructed by the proprietors of salmon-fishings on the main river at a trifling cost. They might also be connected, advantageously, with the Whitadder, Till, Ettrick, and Yarrow.

The process of vivifaction which the spawn is subjected to in the breeding of fish, can be accomplished, I may mention, within the compass of a trough, a small box, or even a hand-basin. All that is required is to obtain a quantity of roe and milt in their proper state of maturity, to mix these carefully together, and, covering them over with river sand or gravel, allow a continuous discharge of fresh spring-water to travel across and moisten the imbedded mixture. The experiment, by aid of a small diversion from some neighbouring rill, may be carried on within doors. In the course of four months—more or less, according to the temperature of the water—the fish will have become hatched, and may be transferred, when the provision-bag adhering to them has been fully consumed, to a more commodious receptacle, supplied, as in the case of the breeding-vessel, with an unfailing run of pure water.

A very small space being required for conducting the hatching process, it would not be necessary, were it found expedient to assist the stocking of Tweed with salmon by artificial means, to form and provide for more than one spawning-ground, say of the extent of quarter of an acre. Millions of ova can be brought to life within a less compass; and the attendance of a single person to regulate the water-courses in their passage over the beds of deposit, to take jottings of the temperature, and report on the progress of the spawn towards vivifaction, would be found amply sufficient. The process, by good management, might be accomplished twice in the course of the year, and a double supply of fry effected.

By those who have read an account recently put forth of the artificial production of fish in France, whereby many rivers where the breed had been nearly extirpated have been re-stocked, and now abound in trout, our suggestion

will be properly appreciated. The success of Messrs Gehin and Remy, originally two uneducated fishermen, in replenishing the Moselle and other rivers in the department of the Vosges, is no matter of fiction. It was acknowledged in 1849 by the Academy of Sciences at Paris, which hailed their mode of proceeding as a discovery of great national importance, and so strongly interested itself in behalf of the experimentalists as to secure for them, at adequate salaries, employment by the French government, "their duties being to stock with fish, by their system, such rivers as should be pointed out to them, and to teach that system to the peasantry." Since entering upon these duties, Messrs Gehin and Remy have plenished with fish, streams and rivers at Allevard, Pontcharra, Sassenage, Veury, Vizille, Bourg d'Oisans, Rives, Pont-en-Royans, Paladru, Lemps, St Geoire, Arandon, La Buisse, and Grenoble, in the department of the Isère; in numerous places in the department of the Haute Loire; also in the departments of the Allier, the Losère, the Meuse, the Meurthe, the Haute Saône, &c.

In Normandy, also, their system has been adopted with great success, as well as in the vast reservoirs of Hunin-guen; in Burgundy, in Brie, and in the neighbourhood of Dijon.

In making the above suggestion, I am well aware that, even were it favourably received by all parties, it is not likely to become acted upon by the upper proprietors, unless sacrifices are made, on the part of those interested in the lower fishings, equivalent to the benefits they are likely to derive from such accessions to the natural produce of the river. I may, perhaps, be accused of valuing these accessions too highly, when, in lieu of them, I would propose to confine the days of the week during which, in the open season, the net may be lawfully employed for the capture of salmon, to five instead of six, combining the Saturday along with the Sabbath as a holiday. Independent of the grounds upon which it is here made, such a proposal is rendered quite defensible, by the fact that the proprietors of the upper fishings are somewhat cruelly used at the mouth of the river, where a degree of skill and vigilance in the capture of salmon is now exercised, not contemplated at the period when the Crown grants

were made. Owing to this increase of experience and assiduity made available by the lower proprietors, a number of the upper holders have been nearly denuded of all benefit in the salmon-fishings; and it would only be doing justice were matters so arranged by legislative enactment as to pave the way for a restoration of their injured property. Such a measure as is here proposed would not only, I am satisfied, have this effect, but it would enlarge and render mutual the interest that all the holders of fishings are presumed to feel in the protection of the breed.

As an additional day of grace, however, may be considered, by the net-fishers, too large a concession for advantages in prospect, I would suggest, by way of an immediate solatium, that all capturing of salmon by means of nets attached to cairns, and with the leister, be henceforth abandoned by the upper proprietors, and made punishable by fine, confiscation, or otherwise. It is only, indeed, by large mutual concessions, such as I have pointed out, that the spirit of co-operation needed to improve the Tweed fishings has its chance of becoming engendered. Nor does the power of refusing to apply the proper remedy for abuses which are undeniable, as regards the salmon-fishings of Tweed, lie with this or that set of holders. The public, generally, have a strong interest in the matter; neither has the Crown divested itself of all right in its original property. I cannot construe the fact of the words, "*Cum una nave et cum uno rete*," occurring in some of the charters conveying salmon-fishings on Tweed, otherwise than that, by this phrase, a reservation is explicitly made of the main body of the "*inter regalia*" in question; and although, up to this date, no disposition has been shown by the Crown to restrict to the letter the privileges of any one holder, such forbearance does not debar its doing so whenever its interests and those of the public require it. A course of legislation different from what has hitherto been maintained, is absolutely necessary for the preservation, not to say the improvement, of our salmon-fishings; and if, owing to the conflict of opinions which prevails among the proprietors, nothing is attempted to be done that promises to better matters, then it is high time for those to interfere who foresee the ruinous consequences of such inactive rivalry. The mutual concessions required to be

made will thus be insisted upon, and the spirit of co-operation, which refused to show itself voluntarily, become engendered by force.

In respect to the control which the Scottish Crown and Parliament thought it expedient to exercise over the holders of salmon-fishings, and in order to give some idea of the limited extent of right which a charter, "*cum piscationibus*," was held at one time to convey, I have only to refer to the Acts of Parliament passed in the reigns of James I. of Scotland and his royal successors. These Acts may be looked upon as running commentaries upon the abuses to which grants of fishings emanating from the Crown were liable; but, more than this, they provided rigorously against the occurrence of such abuses: they were interpretations from the highest source of the granter's intention, and, as such, maintained their ground against all interpretations which favoured the individual holder. In some degree, indeed, they can be recognised as intended to counteract the effect which a profuse and unwarrantable distribution of Crown rights, in favour of monastic institutions, by David I. and several of his successors, had upon this source of revenue; but they are all the more, as remedial measures, although tinged with the barbarity of the age, entitled to regardful consideration, and when brought into contrast with prevailing enactments on the matter of salmon-fishings, at once strike us by their brevity, perspicuity, and direct adaptation to the subject—qualities which, in the wordy preambles and accumulated clauses of modern legislation, we in vain seek for.

The present unhealthy condition of our salmon-fishings calls loudly for enactments of the same complexion, in which abuses shall not be left to be dealt with by contending proprietors, but taken up and provided against as national grievances. Until this is done, until the Crown resumes its original position in respect to them, and, promptly investigating the causes of failure, strenuously exerts itself to apply the remedy, it is vain to hope, springing from a contention of petty interests, for the restoration of our salmon-fishings to their legitimate footing.

The penalties which, by the old Scotch acts, were incurred by slayers of fish in the forbidden season, the third

offence being punishable by death itself, give us to understand how necessary the protection of salmon while spawning was held by our ancestors. What would have been said or done by King James and the Three Estates on the occurrence of such a massacre as took place near Melrose in 1846, when upwards of three hundred breeding fish writhed and bled on the prongs of a single leister, and at least six thousand, which had escaped the toils of the Berwick fishermen, and formed the hope and stay of future seasons of abundance, were cut off by means of the same deadly instrument, along the course of the river? From the effect of this bloody onslaught, Tweed has not yet recovered; still, with shame be it told, there are those on its banks connected with its interests as a salmon stream, who not only defend the butchery on retaliative principles, but announce their intention to re-act it on all practicable occasions. The operations with net and spear against the kelts in the spring of 1852, show that such bravado is not a jest, and do more than make apology for the speedy interference of the Legislature with that system of policy which the present Tweed Act is based upon, and the Tweed Commissioners are contented to pursue.

The leistering of salmon received, there is no question, great encouragement on our Border rivers from those Acts of the Scottish Parliament in force before the Union, by which it is declared, in the shape of an exception to the general Salmon Act, "that the waters of Solway and Tweede sall be reddie to all Scottismen all times of the zeir, als lang as Berwick and Roxburgh ar in the Englishmannis hands." These measures of reprisal continued in operation for nearly two hundred years—probably for a much longer period. We find, however, the earliest mention of this exception in 1430—(James I., Par. 9, c. 131.) It received the ratification of successive reigns and parliaments until 1606—(James VI., Par. 18, c. 37.)

This privilege, granted to our Border ancestors, and so long enjoyed by them, (the rights of chartered proprietors not being so much as condescended upon in any one of the Acts I allude to, even on the occasion of their repeal,) plainly had its effect in cherishing and rendering hereditary the passion, not yet extinct, for so barbarous an amusement. With what a high hand the Crown dealt on resum-

ing its rights, and for whose benefit, in comparison with that of a few nobles and lairds, the protection of salmon was insisted on, may be inferred from the words of the Act.

*“ Act anent the rivrs of Tweid and Annand.*

“ Our Sovereigne Lord and estaites of Parliament understanding that in the act made in his Heighnes Parliament, in the yeare of God ane thousand sex hundreth yeares, whereby the slaying of salmond fishe, in forbidden tyme, or of kipper, smolts, or black fishe at any tyme, was declared to be theft, and the committers thereof were ordeined to be punished for the samine as for theft. The rivers of Tweid and Annand were then excepted, because the said rivers at that tyme divided at many parts the bounds of Scotland and England adjacent to them; whereby, by the forbearance upon the Scots part of the slauchter of salmond in forbidden tyme, *and of kipper, smolts, and black fishe at all tymes*, would not have made salmond any mair to abound in these waters, if the like order had not been observed on the English side. Whilk impediment, through the infinite mercy of God, being now removed by the most happy uniting of baith the kingdoms in ane empire, in the royal person of his most excellent Majestie, undoubted and righteous monarch of the samine. Whereby the inhabitants of this hail isle are equally subject to his person and laws; and the remeed of their harms and the redress of their abuses, punishment of their transgressions, and establishment of their universal well-being belongs to his charge.

“ Therefore our Sovereigne Lord and estaites of his Heighnes Parliament, clearly understanding that the cause of the said exception is now removed, ratifies and approves the said Act of Parliament anent the forbidding the slauchter of salmond, kipper, smolts, and black fishe in manner above written, and pains of theft and death decerned against the contraveners thereof, and retracts, perpetually annulles and abrogates the said exception of the said waters of Tweid and Annand. And decerns and declares that in all tyme comming, the contraveners of the said Act or any part thereof, in the waters of Tweid or Annand, or any part of the samine, shall underly the paines foresaid of

theft and death, according to the quality, rank and estate of the committers thereof, and as if the first act had been general and the said exception had never been contained therein."

I have not yet made any remarks relative to the expediency of shifting the fence season on our Border river. I am called upon, however, to do so, by what was recently in agitation among the upper proprietors,—viz., the extension of the period of liberty enjoyed by the rod-fisher (and which at present stretches from the 15th of February to the 8th of November) over the entire twelvemonth. Were no apology for this agitation to be found in the conduct of the lower proprietors, I would, without scruple, affirm that the folly which looks forward to its success is only surpassed by the selfishness from which it originated. The extension really required, and which in the main-run will favour the true sportsman, is that of the fence season during the spring months. Postpone the opening of the river above its estuary until the middle of March, and what is saved to Tweed, in the way of giving opportunity for the largest description of salmon baggits to spawn and kelts to escape, is beyond reckoning. I recollect well the occasion—it happened about ten years ago—when old Rob Kerse of the Trows, at the opening of the fishings in February, captured with his nets, in the course of a single night, no fewer than eighty salmon, almost all of which were baggits on the eve of spawning, and would have formed, had they been allowed to remain unmolested, a most important addition to the breeding stock. By means of the rod, constant and extensive massacres of those fish and kelts take place during the first four weeks of the season; and although a clean salmon is occasionally captured, the event is so rare that the local newspapers generally seize upon it as a triumph worth recording.\* An extension of

\* The wholesale slaughter of kelts has commenced this year with more than wonted vigour. At Tweed-mill, Twizel, and other netting-stations, hundreds of these fish, and, I have reason to believe, included under the same appellation, a large number of kippers and ripe baggits, or unspawned salmon, were captured and slain in the opening week of the season. These, I am told, fetch at present as their market-price, at Berwick, 4d. and upwards per lb. What do they bring in the midland counties of England?

the open season, and an enlargement of the privilege of the rod-fishers for salmon, under these circumstances, is not to be dreamt of for a moment. On the contrary, a prolongation of the fence time, as regards the upper parts of the river, is imperatively called for, by every well-wisher to Tweed and its fishings. It will naturally enough be asked, what arguments are used by those who wish the angling for salmon to remain an open sport throughout the twelvemonth? The one on which most weight has been laid, is simply this: That anglers themselves, and their dependants, have always proved the best conservators of the river, which is shown by the fact that, during the open season, no sort of poaching is ever attempted; whereas, in close-time, they, whether proprietors, their friends or tacks-men, being deprived, by the present Tweed Fishery Act, of all interest in the salmon which may happen to occupy the stretch of water belonging to them or under their control, poaching of every description is left to be dealt with by a handful of errant bailiffs appointed by the River Commissioners; and its encouragement forms a natural consequence of this transference of power. "But give us rod-fishers," say they, "our full swing throughout the year, intrust the spawning fish to us, and as long as we are allowed to deal destruction among them with rod and line, and to disturb them on the breeding grounds with our boats, be assured no net shall be wetted or leister dipped by gentle or simple, for food or for sport, throughout Tweed and its tributaries."

With such an argument I shall not pause to deal, but I may ask those who are so anxious to legalise rod-fishing during the fence season, how they are to avoid connecting with this object the legalisation of the sale of salmon? and what effect their doing so would have in arresting poaching practices? I would also ask: Are they quite serious in their estimate of the small damage likely to accrue from rod-fishing, in comparison with what actually does happen from the employment of the net and leister, on those stretches of the river which they wish to have constant access to? For instance, take Sprouston Dub, or Rutherford Dub, or Birgham Dub, or the Elshie stream, or any other well-reputed expanse of fishing-ground on the main river—is it meant to be affirmed that, in the course



of the three additional months and upwards which they wish to be included in the open season, fewer fish run a chance of being captured by the rod, in any one of those portions of Tweed, than actually in the same period fall a prey every year to the devices of poachers? Once more: Will the extension of privilege in question, if acquired, be acted upon to the hindrance of leistering in those parts of Tweed and its tributaries where it has been immemorably followed out, and where its pursuit is more profitable, by many degrees, than rod-fishing is?

I am quite prepared, while proposing these questions, to be met with by my own views as to the propriety of legalising the rod-fishing for bull-trout, during the fence season, beyond limits determined and marked out by adequate judges. This is a matter quite distinct from that under discussion, and one which I have given great attention to. The bull-trout I hold to be as marked an enemy to the salmon-fry as the pike itself, and the increase of the species, throughout our British streams, may well be considered a serious evil, for the eradication of which great pains ought to be taken, and great indulgences allowed.

With the foregoing declaration of my views as to the extension of the open season, I have not allowed any feelings of sympathy to interfere; indeed, I entertain none, but rather regard as pseudo-anglers all such as would stretch their season of enjoyment, without break or rest, to the "crack of doom." I cannot be induced to consider the wanton slaughter of kelts and baggits to be worthy of the name of sport. It, in truth, no more partakes of that character than does the destruction of game-birds with the fowling-piece during the pairing and hatching seasons; and surely no one would take upon him to class with manly pursuits an occupation which even incorrigible poachers hold in fitting contempt.

Of my views and suggestions relative to the Tweed salmon-fishings, how they may be sustained and improved at a comparatively small cost, the following is a summary:—

1st, By separating the spawning-grounds of the *salar*, or salmon proper, from those of the *eriox*, or bull-trout, and restricting, as much as possible, the duties of the

river force, during fence time, to those parts of Tweed and its tributaries where the former are situated.

2d, By the formation of an artificial spawning-ground, in the vicinity of the most favourite resort of spawning-fish on Tweed, to which the deposit of breeding salmon, milt, and ova, in their proper state of ripeness, can be readily committed, and appliances put into force for the hatching of some hundreds of thousands of salmon-fry—a mode of increase which, it has been proved by many experiments, both in this country and in France, can be successfully resorted to, and may be made to supersede the hatching of the spawn on the natural “redd,” which, in the case of Tweed, has, from various causes, of late years been rendered uncertain.

3d, By the construction of ponds or nurseries in connection with the main river or its tributaries, to which the fry, when hatched and sufficiently strong, may be transferred, and therein maintained, until such time as they have acquired the smolt plumage, and may be committed to the river, without risk, to act according to their instincts in finding their way to the sea.

4th, By restricting the fishing for salmon with nets during the open season, in the estuary of Tweed and along its course, to five days in the week, the Saturday or Monday being included, along with the Sunday, as a fence day. A suggestion to extend the weekly fence-time has also, I perceive, been made by the author of an article in the *Edinburgh Review* on our “Salmon Fishings.” He proposes that the additional day of grace should be subtracted from the middle of the week; Wednesday, I think, is the day named by him. To be of proper advantage, however, and assist the fish past what has now become the most dangerous section of the netting stations, (that lying betwixt the Chain Bridge and Tweed-mill,) a combination of the proposed fence day with the Sabbath is absolutely necessary. In regard to this section of Tweed, and that immediately above, a suggestion was recently made to me, well worth the consideration of the upper holders of fishings. I have ascertained that the rental drawn for the net-fishings by the several proprietors last year, (1852,) between Coldstream and Norham, amounted to £356, and from Norham to the Chain Bridge,

inclusive, £425. Comprising that of the net-fishings at Lees, Wark, Carham, and Birgham, the whole rental for this stretch of Tweed, exceeding eleven miles, is not more than £1000 per annum. Were those most interested in the rod-fishings of Tweed, and its general prosperity as a salmon river, to join together, and, leasing this portion of its stations, in which the chief hindrance to the free ascent of salmon is effected, convert them entirely into angling-casts, the benefit which would accrue from this conversion can scarcely be calculated. An abundant stock of salmon and grilse would acquire unrestricted access to the higher streams, and the angling, throughout the whole extent of the river, become improved tenfold.

5th, By holding as illegal the use of all devices for killing salmon on Tweed and its tributaries, higher up than the recognised netting stations, save and except those of the rod-fisher; the trawl-net, cairn and pouting nets, to be disused henceforth; and the employment of the leister, under whatever pretence, to be rigorously suppressed on Tweed and its tributaries.

6th, By a prolongation of the fence season, which terminates at present on the 14th of February, until the middle of March, the estuary of the river alone, or that portion of it which, comprehending the coast fishings, extends upwards to the chain bridge below Norham, to continue to be fished from the 14th of February. All kelt and foul fish captured with the nets to be set free.

7th, By the rigorous enforcement of a clause, rendering highly penal the adulteration of the river and its feeders, through the introduction, from manufactories or other sources, of the refuse of dyes, lime, flax, and all pernicious substances, whereby the spawning-beds and young fry are injured and destroyed, and animal life greatly endangered.

Lastly, By encouraging the destruction of sea-gulls and the water-ouzel. The mischief done by these birds has never been sufficiently taken into account by those interested in our salmon-fishings. During the smolt season, hundreds of gulls pursue their depredations on the river unmolested, it being a common notion that these depredations are chiefly confined to insects, such as the stone-fly, straw-maggot, and march-browns; whereas the principal objects of pursuit are the infant fry and smolts.

The EYE, in Berwickshire, was at one time esteemed a good angling stream. It is said, however, in the upper parts, to have been much injured of late by railway operations, but will probably, after a time, regain its former reputation. During the summer of 1848, I killed some excellent baskets of trout, betwixt Aytoun and Eyemouth, with the worm. There are few lakes, and those of small dimensions, in the counties of Berwick and Roxburgh. Coldingham Loch, containing perch, is the largest natural sheet of water in the former; and in the latter, Primside or Yetholm Loch, producing pike and perch; Hoselaw, where there are perch; and Essenside, Shielswood, Headshaw, and Ashkirk, yielding, along with the fish above named, a few trout. The four last are situated in the parish of Ashkirk. In 1848, out of Yetholm Loch the author and a small party of gentlemen took fourteen pike in the course of a forenoon; none of them, however, were of large dimensions.

The TYNE, in Haddingtonshire, is celebrated for its connection with the case of *Fergusson v. Shirreff*, the decision on which has so largely affected the interests of the angling community in Scotland, and has left behind it a degree of irritation not easily removed. Its sources are in Middleton Moor, and it travels, at a somewhat sluggish pace, upwards of twenty miles before reaching the sea near Dunbar. The trout it contains are of excellent quality, and acquire occasionally large dimensions. I have frequently killed them upwards of two pounds in weight. When in season, they are a shy fish, and refuse the ordinary-sized flies, preferring the midge varieties and dull colours. Minnows also are in esteem, if properly selected; and in the streams, when small, the trout take the worm with avidity. Salmon ascend the Tyne as far up as the fall at East Linton, but not in great numbers. The late Sir Thomas D. Lauder, in a well-known and highly interesting series of articles upon our Scottish rivers, alludes to the Tyne as an angling stream:—"The salmon, which are all of them small, do not rise to the fly; but a number of them are taken by Mr Innes by means of shutting and opening the floodgates of an old mill-run, immediately opposite to the church. The trout are remarkably fine, and are red in the flesh when in best condition. The great piscator of the

Tyne is an old friend and brother officer, Captain Shearman, who, during the angling season, may be said to live upon the river. The captain's perseverance and skill, together with his complete knowledge of every hole and corner of the stream, enable him to kill more trouts on the Tyne than any other three men that are in the habit of fishing the river. I believe he has made out as many as six dozen in one day, of which event, we feel convinced, he even was prouder than of any of his brave achievements while in command of certain levies in the Peninsula, or the well-earned laurels which these acquired for him." The burn of Biel, not far off, contains nice trout ; and the loch of Pressmennan is stocked with the Loch Leven breed, as well as carp and tench. This artificial piece of water is nearly two miles in circumference. The right of salmon-fishing in the Tyne is possessed by the Earl of Haddington, who has also the coast fishings on both sides of its mouth, from the Peffer-burn to within a short distance of the Biel water.

## CHAPTER XVII.

## FORTH AND ITS TRIBUTARIES.

THE FORTH, or BODOTRIA of the Romans, has its fountain-head on the north side of Ben Lomond, and traverses Stirlingshire for about ten miles, under the name of Duch-ray. Its current, during this part of its course, is sluggish, and the banks, which are formed of black moss, possess no features to attract or interest the tourist. It then enters Perthshire, and receives, near Aberfoyle, a large accession to its streams in a river issuing from Loch Ard. At its junction with this water, it takes the name of Avondow, and, after running five miles in Perthshire, again passes into the county of Stirling, and obtains the name of Forth. Still, until in the vicinity of Stirling itself, it is not much distinguished either for its size or beauty; and only after having pursued a course of thirty-four miles, and receiving accessions from the Teith and Allan waters, does it become entitled to the rank of a first-class river. The surface which it drains, as it proceeds, has been estimated at five hundred and forty-one square miles, and it conveys to the sea about one-fourth of the quantity of water carried down through the channel of Tay.

In the Forth are found salmon, grilse, trout, pike, perch, sparlings or smelts, along with eels and flounders, and occasionally sturgeon. The salmon-fishings in the vicinity of Stirling belong principally to the town and the estate of Craigforth. The rent of these in 1847 amounted to nearly one thousand pounds. The lower fishings, those betwixt Stirling and Alloa, draw about the same sum. Forth salmon are held in high repute, being large and rich-tasted. Many of them weigh from eighteen up to

thirty pounds, and some have been killed as heavy as fifty pounds. There are no net-fishings in this river above its junction with the Teith, but it contains several good salmon-casts for the angler. The main stream, however, is much injured by the quantities of moss floated down from the upper districts of the county. It yields a considerable number of yellow trout; but these, in general, although strong and active, are not large. The best salmon-fly for Forth is one having yellowish-dun wings, tipped with white, black body, and black hackle, with silver tinsel; the tail-tuft yellow, and a little orange dubbing worked on, at the root of the wings.

The TEITH, which is by far the largest tributary of the Forth, is a clear, fast-running river, with a good deal of gravel at the bottom, and is much preferred to the main stream by salmon and sea-trout ascending to spawn. Its course from whence it springs, in the Braes of Balquhiddy, to where it joins the Forth, lies entirely in Perthshire. There are properly two branches that form this river: one from the braes above-mentioned, which takes its way through Lochs Voil and Lubnaig; and the other passing out of Loch Vennachar, having previously descended Glen-gyle, and traversed the whole length of Lochs Katrine and Achray. These unite immediately above Callander, and proceed, receiving the Keltie during their progress, by the village of Doune towards Stirling, a distance of nearly fourteen miles. All the lochs through which the Teith flows contain trout, and those belonging to the south branch of the river produce pike. This last-mentioned fish has been taken in Lochs Katrine and Vennachar of great size. The trout in Loch Vennachar are of a very superior description, and weigh from one to three pounds, cutting red and firm. In Lochs Katrine and Lubnaig there are a few charr; and in the latter, trout of enormous weight have occasionally been captured. One belonging to the *salmo ferox* species was taken, two or three years ago, by my friend, Charles Ker, Esq., a member of the Stirlingshire Fishing Club, weighing fifteen pounds six ounces several hours after its capture; and a still larger one is reported to have been caught by another party, on a previous occasion. The trout-fishing on Loch Katrine has, I understand, much improved of late years. Loch

Voil also contains trout of large size. They are frequently killed, with trolling tackle, of the weight of six or seven pounds. Salmon are sometimes secured by the rod-fisher in Loch Vennachar, and occasionally also in Loch Lubnaig—the falls at the Pass of Leny proving, however, a considerable obstruction to their progress. On the Teith, under these falls, there is a tolerable salmon-cast for the rod, and below Callander a succession of pools frequented by the monarch of the tide.

In some places, the sea-trout fishing, although by no means first-rate, is in its season worth engaging in. The angler, along the lower portions of the Teith, is much incommoded by trees and steep banks, below which he has to wend his way with caution and considerable difficulty. Good yellow trout are taken, by means of the spinning minnow, throughout the course of the river. In the Keltie and Bracklinn-burn, also in Stanck-burn, which falls into Loch Lubnaig, I have met with tolerable sport. There are two ponds on the Braes of Doune containing pike and perch, Lochs Watston and Loch Maghaig. A cruive-dyke extends across the Teith at Doune Castle, fitted with boxes for catching salmon. The rent it draws is a mere trifle.

Of the streams which enter Forth higher up, the largest proceeds from Lochs Chon and Ard. The trout of these lochs weigh from one to four pounds, and are esteemed equal in flavour to the fish of Loch Leven. They have been captured of the last-mentioned weight by W. Macdonald, Esq. of Powderhall, in Lochs Chon and Arklet, the latter communicating by a small stream with Loch Lomond. Pike are sometimes caught here, weighing from fifteen to twenty pounds. Loch Dronkie, which empties itself into Loch Vennachar, lies at no great distance. It contains fine red-fleshed trout, half a pound and upwards. Farther down, the Forth is joined by the Goodie water, from the Lake of Monteith. In it, and particularly in the lake itself, sometimes called Inchmahome Loch, fine trout exist. These, however, are not very abundant, and of remarkable shyness. Pike were at one time plentiful here, but are now on the decrease, having been thinned with nets. Loch Rusky, in the neighbourhood of Inchmahome, produces this fish and abundance of perch. There are two



or three other small lakes not far off, but none of them merit the angler's attention.

A short way above Stirling, on the Perthshire side of the river, the Forth is joined by the ALLAN Water. This stream runs by Ardoch and Dunblane, entering Stirlingshire at the Bridge of Allan. It contains trout, and in the upper parts a few pike. Occasionally whitlings enter its mouth, and a stray grilse or two.

In connection with the rivers and lochs of Stirlingshire a fishing club was recently instituted, comprising upwards of seventy members, and governed by a stringent code of laws. The prizes contended for consist of a medal, fishing-rod, and other appurtenances connected with the angler's art.

Below Stirling, Bannockburn joins the Forth from the south; and a little way farther down it is increased by the Devon from Clackmannanshire. The main river, from Stirling to Alloa, is deep, sluggish, and winding in its course. It is also, at certain states of the tides, navigable for vessels of considerable burden, and steamers ply regularly to and fro. The Devon joins it about two miles west from Alloa. Including its windings, the course of this stream is twenty-six miles; exclusive of these—that is, taking it in a direct line from its source to its embouchure—it does not exceed six miles. In the upper parts of Devon I have killed great numbers of small trout, but machinery and other causes have considerably thinned them lower down. A few whitlings and grilse find their way up, during close-time, as far as Dollar. Below Alloa, an insignificant stream, termed the South Devon, discharges itself. It contains some pike, and in its neighbourhood is situated an artificial expanse of water, covering, when full, an extent of one hundred and sixty acres, and designated Gartmorin dam. It was stocked originally with trout from Loch Leven, but these are supposed to have died. Pike were afterwards introduced into it, and I recollect one forenoon capturing five or six with the rod, the largest weighing about eight or nine pounds. One was taken out of it, I understand, of the weight of twenty-four pounds. Sturgeon are frequently killed at the mouth of the Forth, and as far up the river as Stirling. In August 1842, I witnessed the capture, in the salmon nets, of two of these

fish. The largest known to have been killed was in 1823, and weighed one hundred and eighty pounds.

After forming its firth or larger estuary, Forth, on the south side, is supplied with numerous contributions. The Carron, Avon, Almond, Water of Leith, and Esk, successively discharge their waters along its shores ; and on the north side it receives the Leven and other small streams. Of these, the Carron contains a few trout and perch ; and in Loch Coulter, which it passes, besides the last-mentioned fish, are found pike. The Avon produces trout, some of considerable size ; while the lochs near its sources (of which there are several) yield perch and eels. In the Almond and Water of Leith, I have caught numbers of trout ; also in the Esk and Compensation Pond. Leven, in Fifeshire, and the Orr, its tributary, contained, several years ago, a good many fish, among which were trout of large dimensions, pike, and perch. I think it probable, however, that the first-mentioned fish are now very rare in the Fifeshire rivers, the *dulcia* of the angler having vanished before the *utilia* of the community. In the Eden, which passes Cupar, there still, I am told, remains a sprinkling of river trout, and a few of the migratory species push up into its waters.

In connection with the rivers discharging themselves into the Firth of Forth may be mentioned the far-famed LOCH LEVEN, in Kinross-shire. This lake, previous to its late partial drainage, extended to four thousand six hundred and thirty-eight imperial acres. It is now diminished, when in its maximum state, to three thousand five hundred and forty-three acres, or by one-fourth of its extent. In consequence of the drainage, the feeding-grounds of the trout inhabiting it have been greatly reduced in size, and the fishings, according to the calculation of Dr Fleming, prejudiced to the extent of £73 per annum. The present rental is upwards of £200 ; and the price of the trout at Kinross, one shilling per pound, that of pike twopence, and perch twopence per dozen. Betwixt thirty and forty years ago, the Loch Leven trout were sold there at fourpence per pound. The fishings in this loch commence on the 1st of January, and close on the 1st of September. In my opinion, they are open at least three months over and above what they ought to be. No trout, in any lake in Scotland, arrive at edible

condition before the 10th of February, and few ought to be eaten later in the season than the middle of August. The fishings of Loch Leven employ two boats and four boatmen, during a considerable part of the season. One of the largest trout captured here weighed nearly eighteen pounds, and they are frequently killed half that weight. In 1822, a pike was caught in this loch, weighing forty-two pounds, Dutch weight.

The QUEICHS, North and South, are the principal feeders of Loch Leven, and the streams to which its trout resort in the spawning season. The North Queich, being the larger of the two, was the one preferred for this purpose, but it is now, owing to the removal of the shelter which its banks and channel afforded, little frequented. After a large flood in September and October, many hundreds of breeding fish were at one time killed here during night with the spear, by parties of poachers; and at the dam-dykes belonging to the small mills, high up the stream, whole sackfuls have sometimes been taken out, on a single occasion.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

## TAY AND ITS TRIBUTARIES.

THE TAY discharges a greater bulk of water than any other river in Great Britain. As ascertained by Dr Anderson, the quantity which is carried forward, per second, opposite the city of Perth, averages no less than three thousand six hundred and forty cubic feet; while its mean discharge below the junction of the Earn has been calculated by Mr David Stevenson to be two hundred and seventy-three thousand one hundred and seventeen cubic feet per minute. It drains no less than two thousand two hundred and eighty-three square miles of country. This noble river is formed of the various streams which empty themselves into Loch Tay, and, passing through its basin, make their escape, in one body, at the lower end of the lake. Of these, the principal are the Dochart and the Lochay, both of which, especially the former, deserve the attention of the angler. The course of the Dochart, after issuing from Loch Ure, extends above ten miles. It contains excellent trout, some, of which attain the weight of two or three pounds. Salmon also ascend it, but not in large numbers, as they are greatly obstructed by a waterfall of considerable height, near the mouth of the river, at Killin. This fall is an object of equal interest to the fisher and the scene-hunter. The former may here practise, if inclined, a mode of angling for salmon, which, although it does not test the caprice of the fish, or even the skill of the fisherman, yet affords, under the circumstances of the case, legitimate sport. The apparatus used is simply a strong rod or staff, to which are appended a cord and heavy plummet, along with a set of large hooks; *tria juncta in uno*. These,

the angler, taking his position on a rock close to the cataract, drops into the foaming water below, the spot where the salmon generally rest having been pointed out to him. On the plummet coming into contact with the bottom, he merely requires to give a jerk upwards with his rod; and should a fish, which frequently happens, be in the way, he has every chance of getting hold of it. I have seen the same mode of fishing practised in the Orrin in Ross-shire, and I understand that, in certain states of water, it proves very successful.

The salmon-fishings in the neighbourhood of Killin are let, on the average, for one hundred and fifty pounds per annum. Besides the falls on the Dochart, there is a splendid cataract on its sister stream, the Lochay, three miles from their junction. Three or four years ago, Professor Wilson encreeled, in the course of a day's fishing on the Dochart, seven dozen trout, three dozen of which weighed respectively, from three-quarters to a pound and upwards. Two splendid salmon also, weighing upwards of twenty-five pounds each, were taken with the fly by his son, John Wilson, Esq., Billholm, on the same river, near Luib, while along with his father on a fishing excursion, the following season.

LOCH TAY contains salmon, pike, trout, and charr. The two former have been captured in it of the weight severally of thirty-six and twenty pounds. A friend of mine, some years ago, caught, while trolling near the head of the lake, a common trout weighing eight pounds. This sheet of water is about sixteen miles in length, and in breadth above a mile; its depth, in some places, exceeding six hundred feet. There are excellent inns both at Kenmore and Killin, also a small one at Lawers, and boats are kept for hire at the head of the lake.

Tay, on issuing from Loch Tay and passing Taymouth, the seat of the Marquis of Breadalbane, receives the Lyon, a considerable stream, which takes its rise from Loch Lyon, at a distance of forty miles from where it enters the main river. I have caught excellent trout in this water. It is also frequented, during floods, by salmon. These are taken chiefly, where the streams are rough and rapid, near the falls of Sput-ban and Moar. Valuable pearls are found both in the Lyon and Dochart rivers.

After receiving the Lyon water, Tay sweeps on through a highly picturesque country, for a distance of twenty miles, before it becomes again augmented by any stream deserving of attention. There are a few small lochs, containing trout on the heights above, which communicate with it as it passes; but none of these merit the regard of the sportsman. As an angling river, during this, or indeed any part of its course, it is entitled only to a moderate share of praise. Although frequented by salmon in considerable numbers, these, generally speaking, are shy of the hook; nor is the nature of the water and the disposition of rocks and channel such as to encourage them to rise freely. By local anglers, however, well acquainted with their haunts, they are taken occasionally of great weight. The yellow trout in this portion of Tay are by no means numerous, but they acquire considerable dimensions. The best lure for them is the spinning minnow, and in clear water, a fine red worm. Immediately below Logierait, the TUMMEL enters.

This river, the largest tributary of Tay, forms the drain to a vast extent of Highland territory. It takes its rise properly beyond the moor of Rannoch, on the south side of Glen Etive, not far from Kingshouse, and is there designated the Gauer or Loud Sound. Augmented in its course by numerous hill-burns, it swells out quickly into a considerable stream; and after passing through several smaller lakes, including Batha, a beautiful sheet of water, two miles long, enters Loch Lydoch. The situation of Loch Lydoch is wild and desolate in the extreme, but the lake itself possesses many attractions, being studded with wooded islets, the haunts of the eagle and red deer, and withal abounding in trout. Of these, the generality that rise at the fly are not large; but I understand, from a gentleman who, some years ago, there being no boat, trolled a part of the lake with the assistance of a lath or otter, that it contains trout of great magnitude, upwards of a stone in weight. After leaving Loch Lydoch, which is six miles in length, the Gauer progresses towards Loch Rannoch, a distance of eight or nine miles, and, forming an island at the head, discharges itself, by two entrances, into the lake. I have fished with great success at this point, which is close to George-town, a small hamlet, affording, with its inn, tolerable accommodation to anglers.

Not far from where the Gauer enters Loch Rannoch, the EROCHT river also empties its waters, pursuing the latter part of its course with great violence. The loch from which it issues is one of the longest and dreariest expanses of water in Perthshire, extending from the inn at Dalwhinnie, above sixteen miles. It contains plenty of herring-sized trout, and I make no question larger ones are to be obtained by trolling. In Loch Rannoch, trout have been caught of thirty pounds' weight, and upwards of three feet in length. They ascend one of its feeders, the Ald Eithach, about the end of September, for the purpose of spawning, and are there killed with the leister by the inhabitants of the district. It is affirmed that no salmon find their way up to this loch, being unable to surmount the falls on the Tummel; but the statement is in part incorrect, for many of these fish are known to overcome the place in question; and I am inclined to think that some of the large spawning trout referred to are neither more nor less than dun salmon.

On its escape from Loch Rannoch, the river glides slowly along for some distance, and then, becoming all at once impetuous, receives the name of Tummel. After a course of several miles, it reaches Tummel bridge, where there is a good inn, and every accommodation for anglers. A little way below this point, the river once more assumes its placid character, and shortly after widens out into

LOCH TUMMEL.—This sheet of water is well esteemed among anglers, not for the numbers, but for the size and quality, of the trout it yields. These weigh generally from one and a half up to nine or ten pounds, and are taken chiefly by means of the fly. In point of shape and edible qualities, they greatly surpass the far-famed trout of Loch Leven. As many as a dozen of these fine fish are frequently, captured by the angler in the course of a day. The fly recommended as most killing is winged with grouse feather, the body formed of purple dubbing, dark hackle, and silver twist. A boat is easily procured, and there are no restrictions in force against *bona fide* rod-fishing.

The falls of Tummel are situated three or four miles below the loch, and not far from the junction of that river with the Garry. Their height is eighteen feet; but salmon, as I have already said, are known to surmount them, and

have been caught, as well as numerous smolts, farther up. In the summer of 1847, a salmon weighing thirteen pounds was taken by the rod in Loch Tummel. Yellow trout are abundant on the river below Loch Rannoch; and large specimens, weighing from three up to seven pounds, have occasionally been caught by means of the minnow and parr-tail.

At Faskally this river is joined by the GARRY, or water of the Den, which, issuing from Loch Garry, near Dalnaspidal, maintains a course of above thirty miles, and is increased, successively, by the Erochkie, Bruar, and Tilt, along with numerous smaller streams. The lower parts of Garry, at the pass of Killiecrankie, are visited, during June and July, by grilse and sea-trout, which, in some places, take the fly freely. Good fresh-water trout are met with in the loch from which it derives its name. Those, however, native to the stream, as well as the trout of Glen Tilt and Bruar, are small-sized, seldom attaining half a pound in weight. The rent of the salmon-fishings in Tummel and Garry does not much exceed twenty pounds. On their junction, these rivers proceed amicably together, passing the village of Pitlochrie and inn at Moulinearn, to Logierait, and there become absorbed in the waters of the main river—the Tay. From the heights to the left, during this portion of their course, they receive its slender tribute from a small lake famed among anglers for the quality of its trout. I allude to Loch Broom, or the Loch of Showers.

Tay being thus reinforced by rivers of no small magnitude, proceeds majestically onwards in the direction of Dunkeld. Not far from where it travels, and on a line nearly with Loch Broom, lies to the left a chain of lakes, all of which eventually connect their waters with the Tiber of British rivers. These are commonly termed the Dowally lochs, and comprise Loch Ordie or Ard, noted for its fine trout—the Loch of Craighlush—Loch of the Lows—Butterstone Loch—Lochs Rotmel, Oishnie, Cluny, and Drumellie. The latter abound in pike and large perch; one or two, also, are said to contain trout of great size. These lochs are connected, most of them, by the burn of Lunan, which falls into the Isla; but as they border upon the district I am treating of, I have thought proper to refer to them at



present. They are, I believe, those at least which belong to the Duke of Athol, strictly preserved.

On arriving at Dunkeld, Tay is joined by the Braan water, which has its source in Loch Freuchie—a well-known and much-frequented trouting loch. The fish there are not large, but lively, and of good quality. There is an excellent and commodious inn at Amulree, in the neighbourhood. A great number of small lochs skirt the elevated ground, along the course of the Braan, and are easily traced by the rivulets they discharge. Some of these tarns contain pike and perch, and others trout of good quality. The Braan is not a first-rate angling stream, but is celebrated for its cascades and fine scenery.

After leaving Dunkeld, Tay proceeds about ten miles in a circuitous direction, when it meets the ISLA—a river of considerable size, which has its origin in Forfarshire. There are several well-reputed salmon-casts in this portion of the river. Commencing at Stenton, opposite Murthly Castle, four miles below Dunkeld, the angler falls in with a fine pool, of about three hundred or four hundred yards in length, where sport is frequently met with. Succeeding it is the “Minister’s Stream,” and, further down, the “Boat Pool of Caputh or Murthly”—one of the best stretches of water in Tay, especially for clean salmon. A smartish breeze upward, however, is required, and the river is reckoned in best trim when slightly swollen. The next pool of any value is “Burnbrae,” a mile lower down, under which is the “Derry ;” then the “Redbrae”—a long pool, with a heavy current in the upper part, and esteemed one of the best salmon-casts above the mouth of the Isla, during the months of August and September. Following it is the “Delvine Lodge Pool,” also in good repute for heavy salmon towards the end of the season. Below are “Greenland” and the “Sebboes”—the latter a deep smooth range of water, extending some three hundred or four hundred yards, under a steep slope. The last-mentioned four pools may be fished from the bank. They are not, however, held in much regard by the angler until the commencement of autumn. A mile below the “Sebboes,” Tay is joined by the Isla at Kinclaven ; and from this point down to the railway bridge at Cargill, a distance of more than a mile, the fishing is excellent. Embraced in the above

space are two pools, termed the "Long Head" and the "Sandy Pool," containing the "Cutties," the "Little Head," and "Davie's Stream." Many a good day's sport has been met with in the Kinclaven water. To command the casts, however, satisfactorily, a boat is required. Below the railway bridge is the "Ballathie water," where the Tay is crossed by a rugged basaltic dyke, known to extend many miles on either side. This stretch of river comprehends what is termed the Linn of Campsie, and, from its rocky nature, is much resorted to by salmon, which find shelter among the sunken ledges and masses of stone that occupy its *alveus*. It is justly held in high esteem by the rod-fisher, and not the less that it is primed with hazards and perilous points, which try to the utmost his skill in the management of a strong active fish, and his prudence in using well-tempered hooks and the best of "gear." The principal casts among the rocks of Ballathie are, the "Rumbling Stone," "Clocksden Head," "Fenton," the "Cradle Stone," the "Black Stanes," the "Back of the Hole," and the "Starry Side." With the exception of the "Cradle Stone," the most dangerous ground for tackle of the lot, none of these can be fished without the boat. There are some excellent casts for rod-fishing down the river as far as Luncarty; the trout-fishing I have found at times good in this quarter. It may be mentioned, that the mode of fishing for salmon from the boat on the Tay, when the river is full, is that called "trolling or harling," and resembles what is practised on our Highland lochs in fishing for the *salmo ferox*. Three rods are placed as far apart as possible over the stern of the boat, each having a different-coloured fly attached to the line, of which from twenty to thirty yards are let off. Small stones are placed near the reel, on a portion of the main line drawn in by the hand, which, when a fish seizes, are jerked off, and give notice to the angler to snatch hold of his rod and prepare for a struggle. The boat, on these occasions, is rowed across the stream, from bank to bank alternately, and allowed, at each return, to drop gradually down until it reaches the foot of the pool. When the river is low, the method of fishing on Tay is the same as that which is practised on Tweed; the salmon-flies used are also of the same description. Until late years, the rod-fishing in the neigh-

bourhood of Perth was not let ; but now from £70 to £80 is obtained for the salmon-casts betwixt Isla and Almond.

The principal tributaries of Isla are the Dean, Ericht, and Lunan waters. The first-mentioned proceeds out of the Loch of Forfar, and although a deep, slow-running water, abounding in pike and perch, contains trout of large size and renowned quality. These are taken, early in spring, with a light-coloured or yellow fly. The sluggish nature of the Isla renders it comparatively worthless, as a salmon stream, for rod-fishing. There is one pool, however, known as the "Boat Pool of Coupar Grange," where, under a stiff breeze, or when the river is swollen, salmon will rise freely. The Ericht is formed by the junction of the Shee or Blackwater with the Ardle, and is received into the Isla about two miles below Blairgowrie. I am indebted to the kindness of a gentleman residing in the district, for the following particulars relative to this river :—"The Ericht was, at one time, among the best in Scotland for rod-fishing. The Duke of Athol, who was in the habit of fishing it regularly about forty years ago, often killed five, six, and seven salmon and grilse before breakfast. For many years, however, the fishing, owing partly to the numerous spinning-mills established on the river, and partly to the means adopted on the Tay and Isla to intercept the fish, has been gradually deteriorating, and at present, excepting when a flood occurs at the proper time, and under favourable circumstances, there are not many salmon to be found in the river. About quarter of a mile above the town is a fall or salmon-leap, partly artificial, termed the "Keath," which prevents the fish from ascending higher up, except during heavy floods. Until within the last six or seven years, the pool immediately below this fall, called the "Skellies," was the best salmon-cast in the river, and seldom deficient in fish ; but, in consequence of a large dam-dyke having been formed across the stream farther down, it has been rendered useless for rod-fishing. Many salmon, however, continue to be taken in it, during favourable seasons, with small circular nets attached to a pole of about twenty feet long. In the course of one night, in 1847, forty-nine salmon and grilse were captured by this means. The best salmon-pools at present on the Ericht are the "Back Pool" and "Bridge Pool,"

close to the town ; the "Stone Dyke" and "Creels," about a mile below it ; and another mile farther down, "Kinloch's Pool ;" after which, the "Red Brae," and lastly, the "Boat Pool," situated about four miles below Blairgowrie. The Ericht is a rapid river ; and all the pools mentioned, with the exception of "Kinloch's Pool," are comparatively shallow ; so that, unless when flooded, they are useless. April, May, and August are reckoned the best fishing months.

There is good trouting, during the spring months, in the upper parts of Ericht and in the Isla ; also in the Lunan, which is a deep, sluggish, ditch-like stream. Trout of two and three pounds' weight are occasionally taken ; and by an expert angler, from twelve to fifteen dozen may be caught, under favourable circumstances, in Glenshee or Glenisla. Lochs Bainie, Vrotachan, and Loch-na-nean, which lie among the hills of Glenshee, are also celebrated for the size and quality of their trout. Fish of from three to fifteen pounds' weight have been taken in them. The Lorny burn, and the loch called Benachally, in which it has its source, also afford good fishing for small trout.

The whole rental of the Ericht, from Keith to Blairgowrie, does not exceed twenty pounds ; whereas, in 1804, no fewer than three hundred and thirty-six salmon and grilse were taken at one haul, out of a single pool close to the above-mentioned village. There are some small lochs containing trout, pike, and perch, on the hills that bound Glenshee and Strath Ardle ; but none of these claim much attention from the angler.

After Isla, the only other rivers of note which empty themselves into Tay are the ALMOND and EARN. The former of these, about twenty years ago, was much frequented by whitlings, but they are now comparatively scarce, at least in the upper portions of the river and above Buchanty. Almond abounds in small trout, especially in the Glen, which is of a highly romantic character. I have frequently fished there, and enjoyed, if not the sport, at least the scenic attractions of that part of the stream. Small pike are very numerous in the Tay, at the mouth of the Almond. Some years ago, no fewer than seventy of these fish were captured, at one draught of the drag-net.

EARN, which joins the Tay several miles below Perth,

issues from Loch Earn, a beautiful expanse of water, measuring in length about seven miles, and of the depth, in some places, of one hundred fathoms. This lake contains abundance of fine trout, and there is ample accommodation for the angler on its banks, both at Loch Earnhead and St Fillans. On leaving the loch, the river wanders through some of the finest scenery in Perthshire, comprising Duncira and Abruchil, until it reaches Comrie, where it is joined by the Ruchil and Lednock. Of these, the former has its sources in the deer forest of Glenartney, and, although at a considerable distance from the salt water, is frequented by large quantities of sea-trout. Indeed, there is at present no stream in the county that equals it in this respect; and, what is very remarkable, while it manifests the rapidity with which these fish ascend our rivers, although Glenartney, taking into account the windings of Ruchil and Earn, is above eighty miles from tide influence, yet, on the occurrence of a fresh or *spate*, not twelve hours elapse before the highest parts of the stream, ten or twelve miles from Comrie, are stocked with newly-run sea-trout or whitlings. I have several times met with excellent sport in this wild and rocky district; but it is necessary that the waters be swollen with previous rains, in order to obtain much success. It is not uncommon for the angler to capture upwards of a dozen sea-trout, weighing from a pound to four pounds each. The bed of the Ruchil is rocky and filled with large stones, among which, and in fierce rapid water, the fish, when hooked, display great activity and make short work of cutting or snapping the angler's tackle, if not well guided and looked to. The fresh-water trout in Ruchil are small but numerous.

Quitting Comrie, the Earn pursues its way towards Crieff; and on its approach to that town, is increased by a small stream, well known in song, the Glen Turret. This rivulet finds its way from an upland loch, famed among anglers. Loch Turret contains beautiful red trout, averaging from half a pound to two pounds in weight. I have frequently fished it; and on one occasion, June 1833, while along with the late Professor Gillespie, of St Andrews, a well-known angler, and the author of an article on the subject of worm-fishing in *Blackwood's Magazine*, captured

upwards of six dozen trout, seven or eight of which weighed above one and a half pounds each.

A good many sea-trout frequent this part of the Earn ; but the salmon, comparatively speaking, are few. Large pike are to be found in many of the pools, especially at the mouth of the Pow-burn, two or three miles below Crieff. Yellow trout also abound in some places ; and, with minnow or worm, one may occasionally fill a good-sized pannier. Not far from Crieff lie the artificial ponds at Drummond Castle. These were stocked originally from Loch Leven ; but I understand the trout have much fallen off in point of flavour, although still maintaining their redness of flesh. There are pike and perch in the pleasure lakes at Auchtertyre and Abercairney, and trout in the Loch of Balloch, at the foot of Torlum.

Below Crieff, a number of small rivulets enter the Earn. Of these, the Mahony and May waters are the principal. The latter abounds in nice trout, and is one of the best angling streams, taking its size into account, in the whole of Perthshire. It is, however, under very strict preservation.

The salmon-fishings on Earn have much fallen off in point of produce. Those connected with the Moncrieffe property are rented for about thirty-one pounds per annum ; those in the parish of Forgandenny for about ten pounds. The best stations for the angler are at Crieff and Comrie, where there are excellent inns. Loch Turret, I may mention, is now under reservation ; but Earn and Ruchil, with the exception of that portion of the former river which adjoins Strowan, are open to strangers ; also the whole of Loch Earn and the district of Glen Almond, not far from Crieff.

Having given a detailed account of most of the streams and lakes connected with Strath Tay, I shall now add a few particulars regarding the salmon-fishings in the main river. Of these, the principal proprietors are the city of Perth, Lord Gray, Lord Weems, Sir J. Richardson, Mr Crystall, of Inchyra ; Sir T. Moncrieff, Earl of Kinnoul, &c. &c. The average yearly rents of the best fisheries have been thus estimated : Lord Gray's, £3000 ; Lord Weems', £1669 ; Sir J. Richardson's, £1100 ; City of Perth, £1050 ; Mr Crystall's, £930 ; Sir J. Moncrieff, formerly,

£800. Lord Gray's stations at one time drew a rental of £4000, and those of the town of Perth about £1500. And as an example of the variation which this sort of property is subject to, I may mention, that the fishings belonging to Lord Mansfield, and extending from Scone Palace to Cambus-Michael, conjunctly with a portion of those belonging to Lord Kinnoul above Quarry Mill-dam, were let in 1844 for £120. Eighteen years ago, the rent was £1100. This singular reduction is owing, partly to the rival keenness and energy with which the lower fishings are worked, and partly to the alterations made as to the close-time, which formerly extended from the 26th of August to the 12th of December, and now dates from the 14th of September to the 1st of February. Another instance of this variation occurs, in regard to the Redgorton fishings, which used to bring £550, and were lately let for £65 per annum.

The numbers of salmon and grilises killed on Tay and Earn during the years respectively mentioned, from the north of the Isla down to the sea, is exhibited in the following table :—

YEARS.	RIVER TAY.		RIVER EARN.	
	Salmon.	Grilises.	Salmon.	Grilises.
1830	27,658	53,249	902	2,655
1831	19,827	38,754	583	1,765
1832	25,898	53,085	766	2,638
1833	20,556	50,612	773	2,240
1834	28,045	47,469	733	1,685
1835	32,964	60,953	1,214	3,394
1836	27,623	32,572	867	1,657
1837	23,871	54,069	668	2,565
1838	21,492	41,936	710	2,506
1839	23,981	21,754	766	1,512
1840	12,650	30,162	447	1,334
1841	24,374	39,563	843	2,297
1842	26,779	80,539	789	2,994
1843	35,126	43,617	692	1,666
1844	31,213	31,353	858	1,239
1845	21,316	44,541	602	1,778
1846	33,807	28,954	847	1,083

During a portion of the grilse season of 1849, the fishings on the Tay, in common with those on the Spey, Dee, Don, and Esks, were remarkably productive ; the supply to the London markets, in the course of a single week, from those rivers alone, exceeding 1500 boxes. On the 25th of July, during one tide, the stations of Elcho and Inchyra, belonging to the city of Perth, yielded 400 salmon and grilses ; and other stations on the river were proportionally successful. Many of the salmon taken on this occasion exceeded twenty pounds in weight. On the two concluding days of the month, upwards of 4000 fish were captured.



## CHAPTER XIX.

## RIVERS OF ANGUS AND ABERDEENSHIRE.

THE ESKS.—There are several rivers of this name in Scotland ; but, as salmon-streams, as well as on account of their size, those belonging to Forfarshire are the most important. The NORTH ESK takes its rise in the mountains of Angus, and travels about fifty miles. Its basin may be estimated at two hundred and thirty square miles. Its mean depth is one and a half foot ; and velocity per minute, one hundred and ten feet ; the breadth where it enters the sea being forty-seven yards. This river is formed, properly speaking, by the junction of three smaller streams—the Lee, the Mark, and the Brany. During the upper part of its course, it receives the Effock, Tarf, Keeny, and Turret, along with other petty rivulets. The Lee, augmented by the Unach, passes through a small lake before joining the Mark and Brany. Loch Lee, the sheet of water in question, extends in length about a mile and a quarter, its breadth being half a mile. It contains, among others, some trout of great size. These are occasionally taken by the troller. Further down, the North Esk receives the West, Cruik, and Luther streams. The trout in these waters are generally small, but plentiful ; those of the Cruik and Luther are noted for their fine flavour. The coast-fishings for salmon at the foot of the North Esk were at one time very valuable ; and, including those of the river, brought, as late as 1837, a rental of £3591. In these fishings, which extend but a small way, as many as three thousand fish, salmon, grilse, and sea-trout, have been taken in one day. There is tolerable rod-

fishing for salmon on this river, as high up as Edzel, where a station, rented at £50 or £60, was formerly maintained.

SOUTH ESK has its sources in the parish of Clova, in a loch of the same name. After a descent of sixty or seventy miles, it enters the German Ocean at Montrose. Besides Loch Esk, two other lakes lie situated among the mountains where it rises, Lochs Wharral and Brany; all three contain trout. Those in Loch Esk are, many of them, large in size, and of good quality. Sea-trout find their way up, in October, as far almost as this lake. The tributaries of the South Esk are the White-water, the Prosen and its feeders, Lednathy, Glenoig, and Glenlogy—the Carity, Lemno, Noran, and Pow waters. These all contain trout, and are severally held in esteem by the anglers of the district.

The fishings for salmon on the South Esk were at one time very productive, those of Rossie yielding annually ten thousand salmon and grilse. The present annual rent of the Rossie fishings is about £650; they have been let as high as £800. Those of Usan were let lately for £50, and the station at Boddin Point draws about £400. In the parish of Farnell, the salmon-fishings fetch £250.

The LUNAN water proceeds through a chain of lakes, Restenet, Rescobie, and Balgavies, which abound with pike. It falls into the sea ten miles below the last-mentioned loch. Along with its tributary, the Vinny, it contains excellent trout, and a few salmon ascend it in the spawning season. There are two fishings near the mouth, which are let for about £140.

The principal rivers in Kincardineshire, besides the Dee and North Esk, which divide it from the counties of Aberdeen and Angus, are the Bervie, Carron, and Towie waters. The Bervie has a course of sixteen miles from the hills of Glenfarquhar, where it rises. It is highly esteemed as a trouting-stream, and salmon occasionally ascend it. The other two are of insignificant size during summer, and but indifferently peopled with small trout.

The DEE, which springs from the mountains of Braemar, four thousand and sixty feet above the level of the sea, has a course, including its windings, of nearly a hundred miles. Its mean velocity is three and a half miles per hour, and

its average depth four feet. As a salmon-river, it is in considerable repute among anglers, abounding in rocky pools and streams, which are frequented, from the mouth to within a few miles of its sources, by the monarch of the flood. The yellow trout of Dee, however, are both scarce and small; and, in this respect, it differs much from its neighbour the Don, which is famed for the abundance and size of its fresh-water inhabitants.

Of the tributaries which Dee receives in the upper valley or glen, the principal are the Lui, the Coich, and the Clunie. Connected with the Clunie water is Loch Callader, the resort of a small variety of salmon, weighing seven or eight pounds. Loch Brodichan, also, is situated in the same district, and contains excellent red trout. These lakes are on the estate of Invercauld, and not far from Castleton of Braemar. At Ballater, Dee is joined by the Gairden and Muick rivers; the latter from Loch Muick, a sheet of water two miles in length. The scenery is bold and romantic, and there is a fine cascade on the stream, about the middle of its course. Not far from Ballater are several other lakes, one of which, the Dhu loch, or black lake, although small in extent, deserves notice on account of the terrific grandeur of its situation. There are also connected with the Dee, by the burn of Dinnet, near Aboyne, the lochs of Cannord and Dawan, containing pike and perch. Here, also, the Tanner and Feugh waters discharge themselves into the main stream. Near where the latter joins, but on the opposite side of the river, is the Leys Loch, containing pike, and frequented at certain seasons by great numbers of waterfowl. The Culter burn is the only other stream worthy of the name, which enters the Dee above Aberdeen.

The Dee, during its course, has been estimated to drain nine hundred square miles of country. Its waters rival in purity the most limpid of our Scottish rivers, the Aven in Strathspey alone excepted. Like those of many of our salmon-streams, its fishings are said to have declined greatly in value. About two hundred men are employed at Aberdeen in salmon-fishing. The quantity of fish caught, in an average season, has been estimated at twenty thousand salmon and forty thousand grilises. This num-

ber includes those taken by stake-nets, and at the mouth of the river on the adjacent beach. A variety of the *salar*, termed canavegs, from the smallness of the head, is said to ascend the Dee considerably later than the generality of other salmon. The Dee, in common with many of the streams on the east coast of Scotland, is an early river. Fresh-river salmon have been frequently taken in it by the rod on the 1st of February, above Ballater, at a distance of forty-two miles from the sea. That stretch of the river which extends from Ballater to Banchory, is accounted the best portion for rod-fishing. The pools included in it are as follows:—Lodge Pool, Tassock, Pool Slaik, High-burn, Twenty-nine, Bob Bah, Redbrae, Bobby's Girnals, Pollar Brock, Cranee, Loggie, Faichly, Boat Pool, Little Hell, Kirkyard Pool, Waterside, Lonaine Pool, the Brig Pool, (the Bridge of Charlton of Aboyne,) Coble Pot, Bellwad, Heugh, Mill Pot, Jock Rae, Calm Pool, Clayholes, Boat Pot, Gennets, Berbowies, the streams and pool of Potarch, Strathseven, (this cast, on the south side of the river, is bounded by the common of Lindrun, and a right of fishing on it claimed by all and sundries, on the head of an old saying, "The peal o' Strathseven's free to a' men livin',") Blue Chain, Woodend, Boat Pool, March Pool, the Grey Mare, Glistar, Sautfeet, Millrush, Rose Pot, Bahour, Sandy-havers. About a mile below Banchory, is a celebrated salmon-cast called the Ess. The flies which I have described as Tweed flies, will be found killing on the Dee during the spring season. Hackles from the heron and golden eagle are made use of, the wings most in esteem being formed of speckled and dun turkey feather. In the grilse season, mallard, teal, and peacock feathers are employed as wings. Showy tips are much approved of. I recommend to the notice of anglers Mr William Brown, tackle-maker, Aberdeen, as a proficient dresser of the flies used on Dee, Don, and Deveron. He is also intimately acquainted with the most of the best salmon-casts on these rivers. I may mention that, on the upper parts of the river, many of the favourite salmon-flies have the hackle closely wound over the body, the dubbings lightly put on, and occasionally omitted. The wings, also, are narrow; and these,

too, sometimes dispensed with, in the fabrication of the lure, so that, thus reduced, the fly has the appearance of a large palmer-worm. The best stations for the angler are Kincardine O'Neil, the Huntly Arms at Aboyne, Ballater, and Castleton of Braemar.

As a trouting stream approaching to the first class in point of size, the DON has few equals in Scotland. It has its sources about five miles above Corgarff, and, including its windings, travels a course of sixty-one miles, emptying itself into the sea near Old Aberdeen. The Don contains trout and a few pike; salmon and sea-trout also ascend it, but not in great abundance, and seldom in their clean state. River trout are frequently killed of the weight of five pounds. On an average, however, they do not weigh more than half a pound. The principal tributaries of Don are the Bucket from Glen Bucket, the Esset, and the Ury. Of these, the Ury, as an angling stream, is by far the most celebrated. Trout are sometimes captured in it of three, four, and even six pounds' weight. This river takes its rise in Strathbogie, and has a course of about twenty miles, including its bends. It is fed by the Colpie burn, the Kellock, the Shevock, and the Gady. Kintore, Inverury, Monymusk, and Alford, are good stations for the angler. The flies used on Don are similar to those fished with on Tweed. Salmon were at one time very abundant in this river, within the memory even of many still alive. No fewer than forty of these fish were killed during one season near the bridge at Alford by a single individual, from the same pool, notwithstanding that it was frequented by all and sundries. The falling off of the rod-fishings on the Don is, no doubt, to be attributed to the mode of fishing by stake and bag nets pursued at its mouth. These, and the number of mill-dykes erected across the river, form great hindrances to the ascent of fish during the open season. The injurious operation of the former, in this respect, will be sufficiently exemplified by the fact, that, in July 1849, when in the course of a single week three thousand salmon and grilse were caught at Don mouth—fourteen hundred of which formed the result of one day's fishing—scarcely any of that large number were taken at or above the first station, which is scarcely half a mile from

the sea. Clean fish are seldom caught on the Don with the rod before the end of March or beginning of April, and then only in favourable seasons, when floods have opportunely occurred. The pools belonging to this river, from Alford downwards, are as follows:—Smiddyhill, Mountgarry, Back of Haughton, Lent Loch, Buckey burn, Dalfeypot, Barley Pot, Knowes Pot, Nancy Cobban's Pot, Uncle Johnny's Pot, Bob Philip's Pot, Broom Brae, Brig Pot (Keig,) Drumnes bannock, Craig Pot, Deepton, Gillan Brae, the Rack, the Famey, Glenton Pot, the Entick Pot, Tillyfour Pot (Kemnay,) the Milton Pot, the Boat-hole, the Breem Brae, the Mill-dam, the Mill-stream, the Garplies, the Rae Pot, the Sheep-pool, the Black-nook, the Stream of Artamar, the Bridge Stream (Inverury,) the Bucky Pot, Balbethan Stream, the Red-bank, Brae Pot, Durie, the High-bank, Brown's Stane (Fintray,) Manse Pool (Parkhill,) the Goval Pot, the Dun-cow (Grandholme,) the Garden Stream, the Souter's Stane.

The pearl-fisheries of YTHAN, the ITUNA of the ancients, have spread its reputation far and wide. It has been affirmed, upon reasonable grounds, that the large pearl in the crown of Scotland is part of the produce of this river; and there is no doubt that a patent was granted to one Robert Buchan for the fishing of pearl-mussels on the Ythan, and afterwards withdrawn by Act of Parliament in the reign of Charles I. The pearl in question is said to have been found at the junction of the water of Kelly with the main river, near Haddo House.

Ythan takes its rise in the parish of Forgue. Its course extends twenty-seven miles, and its height above the level of the sea at Fyvie Castle is one hundred and twenty-four feet. For about four miles at the mouth, the water is brackish, being influenced by the sea tides. It is esteemed, along with most of its tributaries, a first-rate trouting stream. Salmon, sea-trout, and finnocks ascend it in considerable quantities. Ythan is much resorted to by anglers from Aberdeen. Its salmon-fishings belong to the Hon. W. Gordon of Ellon, and are rented by the Earl of Aberdeen. The principal feeders are the Ebrie, Brony, and Foveran, all of which are in high esteem among anglers. There are inns at Newburgh, Ellon, Methlick, and Lewes

of Fyvie. A few lochs are situated not far from the mouth of the river, the principal of which is the Muckle loch of Slains. There are also two lakes, covering about forty acres of ground, within the policies of Haddo House.

The only other river in Aberdeenshire deserving notice is the UGIE, which flows into the sea near Peterhead. It is formed of two streams or branches, the North and South Ugies—the one rising in the parish of Aberdour, and the other, or principal branch, in that of New Deer. These unite at Longside, and enter the sea about four miles from the point of confluence. The Ugies contain a plentiful supply of burn-trouts, some of large size. Their course is sluggish and meandering. Salmon ascend Ugie, but not in great numbers. Near the mouth, finnocks are plentiful. The fishings belonging to Mr Arbuthnot of Ugie Bank, draw, at an average, £45 of yearly rent. The Rathen burn, near Fraserburgh, is an excellent angling stream, and contains trout of considerable size; but salmon do not appear, in the present day, to ascend it. At Pitfour, on the Ugie, not far from Deer, there is an artificial lake twenty-five acres in extent, stocked with tench, carp, and Loch Leven trout. There are also several lochs near the coast, betwixt Fraserburgh and the village of Rattray. Of these, by far the largest is Strathbeg Loch, covering an expanse of five hundred and fifty acres. It abounds with trout, both red and yellow: perch also have been introduced into it, and thrive well.

## CHAPTER XX.

## RIVERS OF THE MORAY FIRTH.

SPEY takes its rise in a small loch situated on the braes of Badienoch, and bordering on Lochaber, in Inverness-shire. Colonel Thornton, in his *Sporting Tour*, relates that out of this insignificant expanse of water a pike was taken of the enormous weight of one hundred and forty-six pounds; and in Loch Alvie, which is not far distant, he himself caught one that measured in length five feet four inches, and weighed forty-eight pounds. From Loch Spey to the Moray Firth, the course of the river is not less than one hundred miles. It drains one thousand two hundred and thirty-four square miles of soil. Throughout its entire progress it presents no natural obstacle to the ascent of salmon, which accordingly, having escaped over the cruive-dyke above Fochabers, wend their way up, during close-time, to its highest sources. The first tributaries worthy of mention which Spey receives, are the Trium and Tromie waters, both of which are connected with hill lochs, Lochs Quoich, Vroltan, and Turlich, containing abundance of small trout. After passing Kingussie, and before entering Rothiemurcus, Spey expands into a lake, termed Loch Inch, escaping from which it is joined by the Feshie water from Glen-Feshie. Lochs Alvie, Rothiemurcus, Morlich, Pittenlish, and Garten, also empty, in close succession, their surplus contents into its channel. The breadth of Spey, on its transit through this district, may be reckoned about fifty yards, and its depth ranges from one to twelve feet. It contains, along with the neighbouring lakes, trout and pike in abundance. Salmon are



by no means so plentiful, except during the spawning season. Charr also appear in the river for about a fortnight, in the month of October. The pearl-mussel is fished up in considerable quantities. The best stations for the angler in this district are Kingussie and Aviemore Inns.

Above Grantown, Spey is joined by the DULNAIN water, and afterwards, on entering the counties of Banff and Moray, by the AVEN, its largest tributary. The Aven takes its rise from a loch of the same name, situated at the foot of Ben Macdui. Its course exceeds forty miles, and it is increased, as it proceeds, by numerous streams. Of these the principal is the Livet water, augmented by the Crombie and Tervie. Loch Aven is three miles long and a mile broad. It abounds in trout of a black colour and slender shape. In its neighbourhood are a number of small lakes, termed the Black-lochies, containing trout. Loch Bulg also is inviting to the angler, and discharges its overflows into the river Aven. There is perhaps no stream in Great Britain so remarkable for the limpid purity of its waters as the one in question. Such, in fact, is its uncommon transparency, that it is reckoned dangerous for strangers to attempt fording it—what appears to be only knee-deep being sufficient to take a man over head. Aven abounds in nice trout, and is frequented, although not in such great abundance as formerly, by salmon.

The FIDDICH is the only other water of note which enters Spey. Its principal tributary is the Dullen. Both contain trout, and are occasionally visited by salmon. There are two inns affording accommodation to the angler in the neighbourhood of Aberlour—one, the New Inn, at Charleston—and the other, the Cottage Inn, on the opposite side of the burn. Besides these, there is an inn on the Aven at Tomantoul, another at Inveraven; also at Fochabers, Rothies, and in various places throughout the district of Strathspey.

As an angling river, the Spey is very unequal. It contains, in the neighbourhood of Laggan, abundance of yellow trout. Among these, several years ago, although in July, and when the weather was particularly sultry, I recollect meeting with tolerable sport. Farther down, it is much

infested with small pike, which commit great ravages among the fry, both of trout and salmon. The salmon-fishings upon this river belong principally to the Duke of Richmond, and were, until lately, rented by the Messrs Forbes and Hogarth of Aberdeen. They extend from the mouth of Spey nine or ten miles, and include a right of erecting a cruive-dyke, which prevents in a great measure the upward passage of the fish. In fact, during the open season, there is no possibility of their surmounting this obstacle, except on the occurrence of a large flood which overtops the line of masonry. On Sundays, indeed, the slap-gate is thrown open; but this precarious mode of admission into the upper parts of the river is not much taken advantage of by the salmon when in a clean state. Accordingly, above Rothes, the number of fish annually captured in Spey is a mere trifle to what are taken in the lower fishings. These fishings are now in his Grace's own hands, but I am not aware that any change has taken place in the mode of conducting them. The rental lately paid by the Messrs Hogarth amounted to £6000; not long ago it was £8200. As many as three thousand salmon and grilse, chiefly the latter, have been captured in one day out of this part of the river. Almost all the fish are sent, packed in ice, to London. For this purpose, eight smacks were kept constantly in employment, each at the expense of £40 per month. The average cargo of one of these vessels consisted of two hundred and eighty boxes, containing severally one hundredweight of salmon. These boxes have been estimated at £5 a-piece, and the number of voyages undertaken by the eight vessels during the year, additional ones being provided when required, has frequently exceeded seventy. The salmon-fishings on Spey are chiefly conducted by net and coble. The men employed are divided into twelve bands, each band consisting of seven fishermen, and a "kenner," or overseer.

During the grilse season, below Fochabers, I understand that the sport is frequently first-rate, and a practised angler may haul in eight or nine fish, and hook as many more, in the course of a forenoon or evening—all of these being new run, well-conditioned, and active. The flies used I have elsewhere described, but may mention that

the most favourite ones are those which are winged with the brown mottled feather taken from the back of the mallard—and having a long-fibred hackle, generally one of those which depend from the breast of the male heron, brown or dun-coloured dubbing, and a strip of fretted tinsel, wound, not too closely, around the body.

It is a circumstance worth mentioning connected with the salmon-fishings on Spey, that, in order to give protection to the spawn against the attacks of the water-ouzel, it was formerly the custom to reward any person who, during the season, had killed one of these birds, by giving him permission to fish salmon with the rod during close-time. This clause, however, is not embodied in any modern enactment relative to salmon-fishings, nor is it at all likely to be introduced in time to come. Still, there is no question that the havoc occasioned among the spawning-beds, by means of the ouzel or water-crow, on most of our rivers in the present day, exceeds all the damage that could possibly be achieved by rod-fishers, whose lures and artifices few fish intent on breeding ever regard. I have often seen, on a single stream in Tweed, three or four of these little birds busily employed filling their paunches with unhatched *ova*. On these occasions, they appear to act in concert—proceeding regularly, pair by pair, up the shallow water. They remain under the surface generally about half a minute, sometimes longer: every dive, on the bird again emerging, is succeeded by a short flight; and on betaking itself once more to the bed of the stream, it does so with a considerable degree of violence. While below water, it walks with apparent ease, and makes the most of its time. The water-ouzel has a fine melodious voice, and on Tweedside pours forth its lay earlier than any other of our feathered songsters.

To revert to the Spey; it is considered to be the most rapid of our first-class rivers. Its general velocity has been estimated at four and a half miles per hour. At the mouth, and along that portion of it where the salmon-fishings are principally conducted, it is liable on the occasion of a flood to shift its channel—consequently few yellow trout are met with below the cruive-dyke; but finnocks, and at certain seasons sea-trout, are plentiful.

The finest salmon-pools for rod-fishing, above Rothes, are situated in the neighbourhood of Aberlour.

FINDHORN has its rise in the Monad-lead group of hills, in Inverness-shire, and discharges itself, after a course of sixty miles, not including its sinuosities, into the Moray Firth. It is a rapid, impetuous stream, subject to sudden and dangerous risings, which make, at certain seasons, its banks and channel unsafe ground for the angler to venture on. In many places the bed of the river lies confined betwixt walls of rock, to ascend which is utterly impracticable; and should, as frequently happens, great rains occur near the sources, while none take place lower down, a body of water several feet in height, with a front resembling that of a huge wave, invariably, without warning, usurps the course of the dwindled stream, carrying everything before it, and silencing at its first dread burst the shriek of horror uttered by the surprised wader. The Gaelic names given to numbers of the pools and fords commemorate many such catastrophes, and speak to the heart, if not to the recollection of the local inhabitant, more forcibly than any other description of warning. In some of the writings of the late lamented Sir Thomas Dick Lauder, as well as in the notes to the *Lays of the Deer Forest*, by the Stuarts, vivid descriptions of the scenery on this river are given.

The yellow trout found in Findhorn are not in general of large size, but they are abundant, and take the fly freely. The principal tributaries of this river are the Moy water from Loch Moy, and Bruach from Loch Bruach. Loch Moy, which is a mile and a half in length, is famed for its charr—which, however, do not take the fly freely, but are captured principally by means of the net. Loch Bruach contains fine trout. Above Dulsie bridge, Findhorn is joined by the Pallanshock, and afterwards by the Dorback from Loch-an-Dorb. Near Loch-an-Dorb lie a number of small lakes, some containing trout, and others pike. The Muckle burn, to which sea-trout have access, discharges itself at the mouth of the Findhorn. It abounds in small fresh-water trout.

The salmon-fishings on this river are by no means so productive as formerly. The great flood of 1829, by

altering the course of the river at its confluence with the sea, assisted much to reduce their value. They are now, however, as far, at least, as the lower fishings are concerned, very much improved, and in the fair way of returning to their wonted state of productiveness. On an average, there are six hundred boxes of salmon shipped annually for the London market, the value of each box being about five pounds. The rent paid for the river, sea, and bay fishing was, a few years ago, £1180.

At Sluie, several miles from the mouth of Findhorn, the fishings were at one time of great celebrity. As far back as 1648, when the mode of taking salmon was very imperfect, it is stated in the *New Statistical Account of Scotland*, that, according to a letter from the Earl of Moray to his Countess, no fewer than thirteen hundred salmon were taken in one night on the pool of Sluie alone; and at a single draught, six-and-twenty scores. About forty years ago, three hundred and sixty salmon were caught in the same pool in one day. The right of angling is retained by the Earl of Moray. At the Ess, or fall, which is about six feet in height, there is practised a singular method of taking salmon. The fisherman has his seat upon a rock, immediately under the overshoot; in his hand he grasps what is termed a *clip*, consisting of two or three crooked prongs attached to a handle of ten feet in length. Provided with this instrument, the points of which are held in readiness under water, he watches the opportunity of the fish being driven towards him by the force of the fall, and, striking with a quick jerk the prongs into its body, generally manages to bring it to land. It is affirmed that one of the fishermen formerly employed at this spot, while hauling in a salmon of large size, lost his balance, and was overwhelmed in the foaming eddies underneath.

The flies used on Findhorn for salmon-fishing differ considerably from those employed on the Spey, and are more assimilated to the Tweed hooks. Long-fibred hackles, however, are generally in esteem; and heron feathers, both for wings and legs, in great requisition. Irish flies, also, are sometimes made use of, and found successful.

The best places of resort for the angler are Freeburn Inn, the bridge of Dulsie, and Forres.

Among the lochs not far from the lower portion of Findhorn, I have omitted to mention those on the estate of Altyre, which abound in trout. The most important of them are the loch of the Romach, nearly a mile in length, and the loch of the Blairs, recently enlarged by the proprietor, and stocked with choice varieties of the finny tribe.

The sources of the DOVERAN are traceable to the confines betwixt Banffshire and Aberdeenshire. Exclusive of its windings, the distance betwixt the fountain-head and mouth, at Banff, is thirty-five miles. The first stream of any consequence which enters it is the Bogie, having a course of fourteen miles. It is fringed thickly along the banks with alder-wood, and affords excellent trouting. The Islay, also, which joins the Doveran at Rothiemay, is esteemed a good angling stream. Farther down, the Forgue Burn, Turriff, and King Edward waters, successively enter Doveran. The salmon-fishings on this river belong principally to the Earl of Fife. They were let lately on a lease of seven or ten years for a thousand pounds per annum. There are also bag-net fishings in the sea, on each side of the river's mouth. That on the east side belongs to Lord Fife; that on the west, although laid claim to by the same proprietor, has been let hitherto, in behoof of the town of Banff, for a sum approaching to two hundred pounds per annum. Besides these, there are other bag-net fishings at the mouth of Cullen water and Boyne burn; also at Blackpots, near Whitehills—the aggregate rentals of which are considerable. The scenery on the Doveran, at the bridge of Alvah, is highly attractive, and surpasses what is met with on rivers more frequented by the tourist. Owing to obstructions at the mouth, the upper salmon-fishings of this river are not nearly so productive as they were some years ago. The rent of three miles of water, above the village of Turriff, does not exceed five pounds per annum. A fair estimate may be deduced from this with respect to the angling capabilities of Doveran, as far as salmon are concerned, higher up.

The best parts of the river for angling in are below Rothiemay. The salmon-casts are as follows:—Mayen Streams, the Yochary, the Brig Pot (Marnoch,) the Fal-

coner, the Hummey, the Logg Pot, the Washing-house Pot, the Rough Stream, Brebner's Rocks, the Stream of Drachla, the Hearn, Turningwheels, the Mangie Pot, Power-duff, Burnend, Scobach, Kirkton Pot, Muresk Pot, the Embankment, the Kirns (below Turriff,) the Elly, the Pownen, Rocks of Ashogle, Kebboch Pot, Sharky's Rocks, Boghead. A favourite salmon-fly on Doveran is the mallard wing, brown hackle and yellowish body underneath.

The LOSSIE has its origin in a small sheet of water called Loch Trevie. It is connected also, near its rise, with Loch Dallas, Loch Noir or Grass Loch, and the loch of Rheninver, in all of which there is abundance of excellent trout. Its mountain tributaries are small but numerous; and on one of them, the Glen Latteragh, or Angry burn, is a splendid waterfall, upwards of fifty feet in height. A little way above Elgin it is joined by a rivulet from the valley of Pluscarden, and farther down by the Lochty and Lenoeh burns. Its course extends about twenty-five miles, exclusive of the windings. It is of sluggish character, especially below Elgin.

The sources of the NAIRN river are at Cairn Gregor, in Inverness-shire, and its length, including the windings, exceeds thirty-six miles. Not far from its rise, it receives a trifling accession to its waters from Loch Duntelchaig. It is connected also with a small expanse of water near Loch Moy; but its tributaries, with the exception of Cawdor burn, which attracts more by the romantic nature of its scenery than on account of its size or angling qualifications, are not deserving of notice. The Nairn, or water of Alders, abounds in small trout, and is frequented by salmon, sea-trout, and finnocks. Of the latter, I have frequently killed near its mouth from one to two dozen. A small black hackle (No. 5 Adlington) proved, in clear water, the favourite fly; but, on the occasion of a flood, larger hooks did more execution. Both the grey and white species of sea-trout frequent this stream: these, in point of weight, range from one up to three pounds.

A few miles from Nairn, on the property of Mr Brodie of Lethen, there is a small lake, having no perceptible outlet, called the Loch of Belivat. It abounds in fine red

trout, of three distinct varieties : the average weight is two pounds. This loch is remarkable for the immense flocks of sea-birds with which it is visited during the breeding season. On the occasion of an excursion there, undertaken by me in 1836, during the early part of May, there were assembled on a morass, at one extremity of the lake, not fewer than ten thousand of aquatic birds, gulls, kittywakes, &c.

The salmon-fishing at the mouth of the Nairn, and along the shore, draws a rent of about £60 or £70. The upper fishings are worth, in point of produce, £5 or £6.

The course of the Ness, from its parent lake to the sea, is not more than eight miles long ; its width is about sixty-five yards, and the average depth of the river during summer three or four feet. At one time, the salmon-fishings of the Ness were very productive—so much so, that, forty years ago, they brought a rent of £1100 per annum ; they were lately let for £370 ; and a further reduction has possibly been made since, as that sum was considered by the tacksman beyond their present value. This decrease in the number of salmon is partly attributed to steam navigation : its occasion has also been traced back to the opening of the Caledonian Canal, down which, instead of the Oich and main river, the fry bred in the Garry, Moriston, and other streams, betake themselves, in order to reach the sea, and are either destroyed by pike in the smooth waters, or perish in their attempts to pass the locks.

A portion of the rod-fishings on the Ness were lately rented by a society of anglers. In the autumn of 1848, excellent sport was met with. No fewer than five hundred salmon and grilse were taken by the rod during that season—ninety-nine by one gentleman, in the course of twenty-two days. For the last three or four years, however, the angling has proved very indifferent. I understand it is again in the hands of Mr Tait of Inverness. I describe the flies recommended by him for the Ness, and rivers in its neighbourhood.

Gaudy flies are at all seasons preferred by salmon on the Ness ; but they are captured also with the soberer



kinds, winged with orange-brown, mottled turkey, peacock, gledd, and mallard feathers. For trout, the mallard wing, with black, orange, deep crimson, and brown mohair for body, black or red hackle and silver tinsel; also lark, landrail, or starling wing, and hare's-ear body, suit admirably. The salmon-flies used in the Beauley are generally winged with turkey and mallard feathers. In the event of snow-water being in the river, a favourite wing is made of the herls of the peacock. On the river Conan the same wings are used with orange bodies and gold or silver twist.

Loch Ness is twenty-four miles long, and averages a mile and a half in breadth. Its greatest depth is one hundred and thirty fathoms. The principal feeders of this large expanse of water are the Oich river, from Loch Oich, the Moriston, Enneric, and Coiltie waters; the Foyers from Loch Foyers, and Farigag from Loch Ruthven. The three first-mentioned streams are frequented by salmon and sea-trout, and all contain abundance of common trout. In the hill-lakes, also, from which they take their rise, the angler will find every encouragement to pursue his occupation. They contain, some of them, trout of great size and delicious flavour; others are stored with pike, and one or two yield the *torgoch* or mountain charr. In Loch Ness itself there are salmon fisheries, but these are not remarkable for their productiveness. Both salmon and sea-trout are to be captured with the rod from the side. They frequent certain bays and localities not far from the margin, and will rise, the one at large flies, such as are used on Tweed and Tay, and the other at the hooks commonly employed in loch-fishing. I recollect having an excellent day's sport along the range of water which extends betwixt the General's Hut and Dores, on the 6th of July 1835; my pannier at the close of the afternoon containing several sea-trout, averaging in weight from three to one and a half pounds, and a number of large yellow trout, some of them upwards of two pounds. Had I been previously acquainted with their resorts, I have reason to believe my success would have been much greater. Very large yellow trout are occasionally captured by the troller in Loch Ness. In Loch Ruthven are

found very fine red trout, weighing from a quarter of a pound up to one pound and a quarter. It is much raked over, as well as Loch Ness, by the lath or otter. Loch Duntelchaig, nine miles from Inverness, contains both trout and pike. In Loch Ashie the trout are very small. The flies for these lakes are the drake or lark wing ; orange, black, crimson, brown, and hare's-ear bodies, red hackles, and silver twist. Summer is the best season for fishing them. In Loch Ness, trout are occasionally caught by the troller weighing from six to twenty-five pounds. There are pike at the west end. It may be fished with success all the year round.

The Moristou is an indifferent angling stream, except for pike. In Loch Oich and the river Garry splendid sport is frequently obtained. The flies used are those winged with the turkey and mallard feathers. Hooks dressed in the Irish style are also found killing. Loch Lochey and Loch Moy are in no great esteem among anglers. The Garry river, discharging itself into Loch Oich, and the Oich, which connects that loch with Loch Ness, are frequented by salmon, and afford, occasionally, fair sport to the angler. Pike are plentiful in both lakes, and attain large dimensions. There are good inns at Drumnadrochit, Invermoriston, General's Hut, and Fort Augustus. The whole of the salmon-fishings in Inverness-shire draw a rental not exceeding £3000.

## CHAPTER XXI.

## THE BEAULEY AND CONAN, ETC.

THE BEAULEY is formed by the junction of several streams, the principal of which are the Glass, Farrar, and Cannich rivers. All these have their connection with lochs of considerable extent, situated in a wild and little-explored district of country. The largest are Lochs Affaric and Benevian, communicating with the river Glass; Loch Moyley discharging itself through the channel of the Cannich; and Lochs Monar and Muille, which have their means of escape in Glen Farrar, and cede their tribute to the main river at Castle Erchless. Of these lochs, the most in repute among anglers is Loch Monar, where there is an excellent fishing-station, and trout of good quality are very abundant. At Loch Muille, Lord Lovat has erected a neat shooting-box. Loch Affaric abounds in small trout. The finest trouting lake, however, connected with Beauley, is situated in a more accessible region. It is called Loch Bruiach, and lies somewhat more than four miles due west of the parish church of Kiltarity. There are found in it seven varieties of trout, many of them of large size. Charr also are abundant, and take the fly occasionally. Loch Gorm, Lochnambrodarg, and Lochcarnabattan, are all in good esteem, as well as Lochgarbrad, situated about a quarter of a mile from Loch Bruiach. Loch Neattie, in the same district, contains pike. The Glass, Farrar, and Cannich, are not much in repute as angling streams. They are thinly stocked with small trout. Occasionally a large one is met with, and in some places a few pike are found.

The Beauley so called, extends from the point of confluence betwixt the Glass and Farrar rivers to the Beauley Firth, a distance of nine miles. It abounds, below the falls of Kilmorack, with salmon, grilises, and sea-trout. Lord Lovat is sole proprietor of the fishings on this river. They brought, until lately, a rent of nearly two thousand pounds per annum, and are conducted by the tacksman at a comparatively small expense, employing only twelve men. In common with those of other rivers in its neighbourhood, the salmon-fishings of the Beauley, during the last two or three years, have proved very unproductive. A singular story is related as to the way in which these fishings came into the possession of the old Lovat family. It is said that Simon, Lord Lovat, on the occasion of the estate being forfeited after the first Rebellion in 1715, requested the Duke of Gordon, his personal friend, to present a petition which he had drawn out to the king. The substance of his request was, that "one lea rig behind the castle" might be given to him and his heirs in perpetuity. Amused with the eccentricity which appeared to have dictated this demand, the king gave orders that it should be complied with. The "lea rig" meant the river.

About two miles west from the village of Beauley are situated the celebrated falls of Kilmorack. These, in conjunction with the story of the kettle, into which salmon leapt of their own accord, have been often described, and are visited annually by numbers of tourists. The lower of the falls is about eight or ten feet in height. Over it the salmon find their way with comparative ease. The principal obstacle to their progress is the upper cataract, which, besides being at least a couple of feet higher, is more violent and headlong in its character. Accordingly, in their attempts to clear it, the fish are frequently driven back and cast upon a rock near the foot, whence they slip into their native element. To prevent their doing this, branches of trees were wont to be placed on the natural platform alluded to, so as to hem them in while struggling, and render their capture easy. At present, however, no recognised means are resorted to for taking salmon at this spot, but there is a box-cruive at the foot of the lower falls, and another, the dyke of which extends across the river

about a mile farther down. A few salmon find their way up into the Glass and Farrar rivers ; but their number is so small as to present no temptation to the angler. Were more facilities of access to the upper spawning-grounds given to salmon, the Beauley and its tributaries would, there is no question, hold a far better position than they do at present among our salmon-rivers. There is an excellent inn at the village of Beauley, and a small one at Struy bridge, near the junction of the Glass and Farrar, about ten miles higher up. Independent, however, of the hospitality of its inhabitants, this district affords but scanty accommodation for travellers. At the shepherds' houses in Strath Affaric, the angler will always be welcomed, and find snug if not comfortable quarters. Boats also can be procured on some of the lakes.

The CONAN.—Loch Roshk or Chroisg has been assigned as the parent lake to this river—the great drain of a very considerable portion of Ross-shire. The source referred to is distant about five and thirty miles from the Cromarty Firth, at the point of debouchement. The Conan has been estimated to discharge seventy thousand cubic feet of water per minute. Its name is said to have relation to its being formerly infested by numbers of otters. Like the Teith and Ythan, it is famed for its pearls, which are numerous and of great beauty. Loch Roshk, where it rises, has a high reputation among anglers, but is seldom visited, being situated in a wild mountainous district. On its escape from this lake, the Conan enters Strath-Bran and passes Ledgowan Loch, a small sheet of water lying about two miles west of Achnanault. Ledgowan Loch contains pike and trout of great size, varying from three to ten pounds. These are captured both by trolling, and with large flies, dark in the colour, resembling those used in many rivers for summer grilse. About a mile from Achnanault, where there is a good inn, the Conan expands into another lake termed Achin, also in high esteem, and stocked with large trout. Succeeding it is Loch Huelim or Cullem. Here I once captured from the margin several yellow trout weighing about two pounds a-piece. Pike frequent both these lochs, and infest the Conan throughout its course. At Grugie, the main river is joined by a stream

from Loch Fannich—an expanse of water fully twelve miles in length, abounding in small trout, and containing, probably, some of great size. After a further course of about two miles, Conan enters Loch Luichart, a fine lake extending fully six miles, and filled with delicious trout, varying from half a pound to a pound in weight. Of these, with the fly, I have frequently killed three or four dozen in the course of as many hours. On leaving Loch Luichart, the Conan, during a further course of two miles, dashes along with great violence and rapidity. At one place, not far from the lake, it forms a grand and imposing waterfall, which is rendered to the eye of the spectator more effective by the savage and singular nature of the surrounding scenery. Beyond this, salmon are unable to ascend ; but it was at one time in contemplation to cut and blast out the face of the rock, so as to form a staircase by which these fish could gain entrance to the spawning-grounds of Strath-Bran and Fannich. A short way below the falls stands the hamlet of Upper Scatwell, consisting of a few poor hovels. Here the Conan is joined by a stream of considerable dimensions, the Meig, which has its origin in Glenigag, passes through Loch Benachan, and traverses Strath-Conan so named. Not far from where this river enters Conan, lie the falls of Meig, below which is a salmon-cast in good esteem among the inhabitants of the district. There are also, on the Conan above Scatwell, one or two pools where rod-fishing for salmon is often successfully practised.

On the hills betwixt Scatwell and Grugie bridge is situated a small lake, about a mile in circumference, out of which, in July 1835, I captured a trout, weighing nearly seven pounds, and excelling in shape, beauty, and quality, any fish I ever saw. The Gaelic name given to me for this sheet of water was Loch Badienoch. Below Scatwell, Conan, for about a mile, pursues a sluggish course, and in some places is of great depth. On reaching Muirtown, however, its character again changes ; and, after accomplishing a leap of some height, its waters glide along with considerable velocity. There are several casts for the salmon-fisher near this point ; and the river, at certain seasons, especially in July and August, abounds in fish.

Yellow trout, however, are by no means plentiful; but Annocks and sea-trout ascend in considerable numbers.

Below Muirtown, Conan is enlarged by the RASAY, or BLACKWATER, another stream of some magnitude. In the upper part of its course the Rasay is termed the Garve river. Its sources are in Strath-Vaich, on the confines of Loch Broom, at Lochs Tolimuir and Garragan. On descending Strath-Garve, it swells out into a lake of about a mile and a half in length, containing pike and trout of superior size and quality, but extremely shy. Of these, I seldom have captured above three or four in the course of a day, averaging from four and a half to one and a half pounds. The trout of Loch Garve are remarkable for the fewness of their spots or *maculae*, and the green copper lustre that pervades the upper portion of their flanks. They are also deep in the shape, and cut redder than salmon.

Below Loch Garve is a smaller sheet of water, through which the Rasay passes. It contains pike, and a few trout. The first-mentioned fish also infest the stream in great numbers. Immediately above Tarvie wood the river takes a bend, and forms a kind of small lake. Here I have frequently killed, both with fly and parr-tail, trout of great size. In 1835, I recollect capturing, along with many others, four trout, weighing severally betwixt three and four pounds. On this occasion, two of these were taken with the common gorge-hook, employed for pike; the other two I caught with large-sized loch flies. I fished this pool very carefully in August 1844, both with fly and small trout, but succeeded merely in capturing three pike, of about four pounds' weight each.

A short way below the places referred to are situated the Falls of Rogie—a fine natural cascade, embosomed among birch forests. It is only during a large flood, which increases what may be termed a wing of the fall, that salmon can force their way up. Below this point, the rod-fishing, for upwards of a mile, is of a very superior description, and the appearance of the water and channel at once indicate that it is so. The fishings belong to the estate of Coul (Sir Alexander Mackenzie, Bart.) Owing to the dark nature of the water, salmon, after ascending into Rasay, soon lose their silvery appearance.

The salmon frequenting Rasay are of a variety quite distinct from those of the Conan and Meig, but they are all three sorts remarkable for their richness of flavour. The cruive-dyke below Brahan Castle prevents their access to the upper waters, except on the occasion of large floods or through the Sunday slap. When the water is of moderate size, and salmon have been on the run, they will not rise at the fly in Rasay until after a day's rest, as has been ascertained by the circumstance that new-run fish are only to be captured there on the Tuesdays and Wednesdays, and never on the Mondays. A stay of three days in the river is sufficient to give them a tinge of blackness, and rid them entirely of the *monoculus piscinus*, or sea-louse.

The lowest pool on the Blackwater where salmon are fished for with rod and line is that at Contin bridge, near which there is a comfortable inn.

About a mile to the south, on the road to Scatwell, is situated a beautiful sheet of water, Loch Achilty, surrounded with weeping birches, and containing charr and fine trout. Of the former, in July 1835, I captured, one forenoon, by means of the brown hackle and other flies, no fewer than eighteen, along with four dozen trout. Loch Achilty is fed by a small rivulet issuing from a chain of lakes above Craigdarroch. It has, however, no visible outlet, but is connected subterraneously with the Rasay or Blackwater, as the springs on the side of that river lying nearest the loch sufficiently indicate. Following its feeder upwards, we are guided through a woody dell to another small lake, Loch-an-Dramh, containing nice lively trout; and beyond it to a larger one, termed Loch Nech Beann, or the Lake of the White Horse. This sheet of water is held in high repute for the quality of its fish. They are red-fleshed, and, on the average, weigh nearly a pound. Of these, about a dozen and a half are reckoned a fair number to capture with the fly in the course of a forenoon. An islet at one end of Loch Nech Beann was occupied, until lately, by a small heronry, but the trees on which the nests were built having rotted and given way, it is now, I understand, nearly deserted. Still higher up than this sheet of water, lies a fourth lake not half



a mile in circumference. Its connection with the others is scarcely traceable, except after heavy rains. Here I once captured, with large flies, eleven trout, none of which were under two pounds in weight, and the greater part of them above three.

Reverting to the Rasay, this river joins the Conan about two miles below Contin. Few salmon rest in its lower pools, which are of a sluggish nature, and their principal inhabitants are pike. There is a salmon-fishing where the rivers meet, immediately above Moy ferry. The angling, however, until we arrive at the cruive-dyke, two or three miles farther down the river, is very indifferent. From this point to the sea, finnock, during certain months, are abundant, and occasionally grilse and salmon-trout afford sport to the rod-fisher. On the hills above Brahan Castle, and close to Strathpeffer wells, are situated two lakes, Loch Kinellan and Loch Ussie, both of which contain pike, but no trout. The Orrin discharges itself into the main river on its south side, about three miles below Contin. Salmon ascend it, but not, during the open season, in great numbers. At a fall, three or four miles from its mouth, the same method of catching them is practised which I have described as taking place on the Dochart near Killin.

As it is only within these few years that the stake-nets at the mouth of Conan were abolished, it is difficult to say what effect their removal will ultimately have on the river-fishings. The cruive-dykes, so general in our northern salmon-streams, are still serious impediments to ascending fish, even during close-time, and when the slap-gate is thrown open. They are now so constructed that their intention is evidently not to entrap, but to detain or keep down the salmon, so that they cannot get beyond them, and may be captured with the drag-net out of the pool or pools below. The cruive itself is in many cases a mere farce, and so encompassed with bugbears that it is a matter of little importance whether the slap-gate remains open or shut, as no salmon are permitted to approach it. This surely was not the original intention of those charters, upon which a right of erecting cruive-dykes from bank to bank, for the purpose of taking salmon, is founded ;

and I question much if any law-court, made acquainted with the practices by which the owners and tacksmen of the lower fishings on many of our salmon-streams contrive to damage the property of those immediately above them, would so construe the grants in question as to sanction the continuance of a system manifestly unjust. These remarks are not intended particularly to apply to Conan, where, I believe, a fairer passage, as far as the nature of the barrier can afford it, is given to the fish than in most rivers having cruive-dykes built across them.

The best stations for the angler, in this part of Ross-shire, are Achanault, Garve, and Contin inns.

The only other streams worth mentioning, which enter the Firth of Cromarty, are the Peffery burn, near Dingwall, the Ault-graad and Skiack, near Kiltearn, the Alness and Balnagown waters. Of these, the first-mentioned contains a few black trout. The others, when swollen, are frequented by finnocks, sea-trout, and a sprinkling of salmon. In Lochs Glass and Moir, where respectively the Ault-graad and Alness waters take their rise, the angling is said to be good. Loch Glass is about six miles in length, and connected with it are a number of smaller lochs abounding in trout, some of which attain large dimensions. Of the Alness, from the appearance, I have formed a fair opinion. The fishings on the river belong to — Matheson, Esq. of Ardross. There are one or two small inns on the line of coast betwixt Invergordon and Dingwall, at the villages of Alness and Evan-town, where the angler may procure quarters. Stittingham Inn also is favourably situated for the Alness. A small loch, which it overlooks, contains numbers of her-ring-sized trout.

## CHAPTER XXII.

THE RIVERS OF THE DORNOCH FIRTH AND EAST COAST  
OF SUTHERLAND.

THE Oikel has its sources in Loch Ailsh, a wild mountain-lake lying to the east of Ben More of Assynt, and discharges itself, along with the Shin, into the upper part of the Dornoch Firth, or what is generally termed the Kyle of Sutherland. Its course extends about thirty-five miles, five of which only, from the falls above Oikel bridge downwards, can be said to afford good rod-fishing for salmon. The casts may be described as follows:—The lowest is the New Channel pool, where, towards the end of the season, fine salmon and grilse are wont to lie. The next above is the Tootam pool, a still better resort for fish; then the Red Brae, close to the village of Brae; and half a mile higher up, nearly opposite the Lodge, what is called the Langwell pool, or Banker's Dip, one of the best casts in the river. Above this is Hector's reach, a long stretch of rather smooth water, over which, in certain states of the river, fish distribute themselves. Superintending it is the Old File's hole, where there are three or four good casts. Higher up lie the Rocks or Rapids—also, when the river is not too full, a favourite cast with the rod-fisher. A short way above the Rapids is Whitehead's pool, in high repute for large fish; succeeding which are several excellent casts—the one at the junction of the Eanaig, or Ennick, holding the preference. The Brig pool, above Oikel bridge, half a mile farther up, is also one of the best on the river; and a succession of small casts, all worthy of notice, intervenes betwixt it and the falls, to within twenty yards of which the Oikel can be fished with the rod. At the falls, the salmon-fishing is conducted by two practised

hands—Hugh Macleod and Hector Munro—with the hoop-net. Hundreds of fish are taken annually at the spot in question, by means of this simple device. In the upper range of the river there is a great extent of beautiful spawning-ground, to which the wedge, lever, and a few barrels of gunpowder judiciously employed, would give proper access. The fishings on the Oikel belong to Sir Charles Ross of Balnagowan. Those on the Langwell estate, below the falls, have been leased, along with the shootings, for a term of years, by F. J. Whitehead, Esq. As many as sixteen fish have been killed on the Oikel in one day by a single rod. Colonel Oswald, a celebrated angler, some years ago captured, in the course of a few visits, fifty salmon and two hundred grilse. Such feats, however, could only have been accomplished under very favourable circumstances. Small Irish flies—those especially in which the jay or a bluish hackle is used for the shouldering—have been found killing. The golden pheasant crest-feather for tail, and a light yellowish body, are recommended. In a low state of the river, darker flies take the preference.

The principal tributaries of the Oikel are the Cassley and Eanaig. In the event of summer floods, the grilse-fishing on the lower parts of the Cassley often proves excellent. When the river is low, however, sport is seldom obtained. About a mile above Rosehall, a salmon-leap of considerable height occurs. The banks of the Cassley are much incommoded with brushwood. There is excellent trout-fishing in the upper parts of the river. On the Eanaig, grilse are frequently caught. The casts, however, are limited to the pool nearest the Oikel—the Brig pool and Punch's hole being the principal ones. Both the Oikel and Cassley have their sources in numerous lochs, the contents of which have not yet been subjected to an examination. Some of them, however, contain charr, which has been ascertained from the circumstance of these fish having been taken, while spawning, in several of their feeders.

The Carron, which discharges itself into the Kyle of Sutherland, near Bonar bridge, is in good repute as a salmon-stream. At the sources of the Carron are several lochs, the most attractive of which is Loch Chorrh, con-

taining trout of five or six pounds' weight. Very superior trout are found in Loch Culrain, situated four miles from Bonar bridge. Migdale Loch, belonging principally to — Dempster, Esq. of Skibo, and situated on the Sutherland side of the Kyle, is a considerable sheet of water. Pike were transplanted to it some years ago, and are now very abundant, as well as of large size. It contains also good trout, of from two to four pounds in weight. The best quarters for anglers are — for the Oikel and Cassley, Oikel Bridge Inn; for the Carron, the Balnagowan Arms, or Ardguy Inn, situated not far from the mouth of the river. At Bonar bridge, also, good accommodation can be obtained.

LOCH SHIN, out of which the river Shin flows, is a large expanse of water, twenty-four miles in length, and, measuring it by a straight line through the centre, eighteen miles. It forms one of a chain of lakes, including Loch Merkland and Loch More or Rynie, which extends nearly across the island—the west end of Loch More being only a mile distant from Loch Stac, and within a few miles of Loch Laxford, an arm of the Atlantic. The *salmo ferox* is found throughout Loch Shin. It abounds particularly at the upper part of the lake, and in Loch Griam, which superintends it. The best quarters for the troller are at Lairg, where there is a large and comfortable inn; and the landlord, Mr Mackay, has at command several good boats during the spring and summer months. In the shooting season, however, the greater portion of the premises are occupied by the Earl of Ellesmere and suite. The services of Mackay the ferryman, and his step-son Brock, will be found invaluable to the troller—both of them being experienced rowers, and well acquainted with the beats and haunts of the fish. Three shillings is the fee usually given to each person employed, along with luncheon or refreshments. No charge is made for the use of the boat to a party residing at the inn. The principal feeders of Loch Shin are the Tyrie and Fiag waters. Their discharge into the loch is rendered conspicuous from a distance by large accumulations of sand and fine gravel, which I have no doubt, during the breeding season, are resorted to not only by the *salmo ferox* and common trout, but also by the salmon of the river Shin—a river, I may mention, that, in proportion to the

quantity of salmon ascending it for breeding purposes, appears of itself insufficiently provided with spawning-ground. The lower section of Loch Shin, close to Lairg, forms properly a distinct sheet of water. It is shallow and muddy at the bottom, but abounds in small trout, which are serviceable to the troller as baits, when better cannot be procured. At the head of this section it was, where it is connected by a flow of water with the main loch, that the Duke of Argyll, three or four years ago, captured a grilse with the minnow—the only individual of the *salar* species known to have been taken by the angler in Loch Shin. The Tyrie and Fiag, I may state, were made subjects of experiment, several years ago, by Mr Young of Invershin, who, by the transference of the salmon-spawn into their beds, induced, it is believed, the progeny hatched therefrom periodically to visit those rivers.

Not far from Lairg are situated the celebrated trouting-lakes, Craggie and Doulas, belonging to Sir James Matheson, Bart. of Achany. The shape, appearance, and quality of these trout are unsurpassed by any in the district. They weigh, in general, from one up to three pounds.

The SHIN, as a salmon-river, is held by anglers in deserved estimation. Although not more than six or seven miles in length, it embraces within these limits a succession of beautiful casts or pools. During its course there occur two falls or “Esses,” one of considerable height, which the salmon appear to find some difficulty in surmounting. To facilitate their ascent, the upper part of the rock was, several years ago, reduced by the chisel. A still further reduction of this obstacle to their progress might be made with advantage; for, although numbers of fish, especially grilse, contrive to find their way to the higher parts of the river, a large proportion is beaten back, and compelled to spawn in places not the most conformable to their habits. With regard to the lower Ess, which hardly deserves that name, being a mere break of water, it is remarkable that, in the early part of spring, it forms the *terminus* to the fly-fisher’s sport—all the captures of salmon made with the rod during February, March, and a large portion of April, being confined to the lower casts. In the Blackwater, which joins the Conan, in Ross-shire, there are two falls or Esses corresponding to those of the Shin, and a

similar illustration of the habits of the fish is there afforded. After May, and during the grilse season, the best rod-fishing is obtained beyond the point in question, in the pools which immediately surmount it. The names of the best casts on the Shin, from the Big Fall downwards, are as follows: The Big Fall, the Culaig, Cromarty Pool, Pool Enick, Firdam Pool, Clarach More, Piper's Hole, Little Fall, Coiness, Clack Dhu, Clarach Beg, Angus Turn, Smith's Pool, Bridge Pool, Cruive Hole, Garden Pool. The casts on the upper part of the river commence at the Chapel Bridge, and extend to within a mile of the Big Fall. Both the net and rod fishings of the Shin are held in lease by Mr Andrew Young of Invershin, formerly manager of salmon-fishings to his Grace the Duke of Sutherland. Mr Young is well known as a zealous inquirer into all points of natural history connected with the salmon tribe. His enthusiasm upon such subjects is only surpassed by his readiness to communicate his acquirements, and to afford parties angling on his river every facility for obtaining sport. The Shin is divided by him so as to give occupation to a limited number of rods, upon each of which a charge is understood to be made similar in amount to the dues of a Tweedside fisherman. I would recommend the sportsman on the banks of the Shin to secure the services, as an attendant, of Donald Ross, who, besides being a good gaffsman, and well acquainted with the river, will be found to be agreeably civil and obliging. At Inveran, close to the Bridge of Shin, there is an excellent inn, presided over by Mrs Mackay, who, as an attentive hostess, I have heard spoken of in the highest terms. The flies used on the Shin are, on the whole, very similar to those employed on Tweedside. Early in spring, large Scotch hooks—the white and snipe-wing—are found killing. These occasionally may be exchanged, without prejudice, for Irish ones—the Childers or Doctor for instance. As the season advances, and smaller sizes of flies become necessary, a great variety, even of fanciful patterns, may be brought to bear successfully on the caprices and humours of the fish. When I visited the Shin in August 1850, the river happened to be in a greatly dwindled state—reduced, Mr Young informed me, to an extent he had seldom witnessed or anticipated, as the large expanse of lake from

which it flows generally contributes to keep its channel full when other rivers in the neighbourhood have become nearly dried up. On this occasion, I fished the streams above the Ess, and, in the course of two or three hours, under a bright sun, landed three grilse, the fly used being a small Childers. On the 14th of September, the last day of the season, I fished the lower part of the river, then in high order, as far up as Pool Enick, but only succeeded in killing two fish, both with Irish flies of a fanciful description. My limited success on these two occasions was in character with what the season afforded—a season unquestionably the worst on record, as regards grilse and salmon-fishings, ever experienced by the angler. Of the sport to be obtained on the Shin in a favourable season, I may mention, as a specimen, what was achieved in August 1849, by two well-known and enthusiastic fly-fishers, Major Gordon Cumming, and Mr Fitzgibbon, the “*Ephemera*” of *Bell's Life*; the former killing, in the course of ten hours, twenty-two salmon and grilse; the latter, fifty-two of these fish in the space of fifty-five hours.

The FLEET has its origin on a rising ground betwixt the parishes of Rogart and Lairg. During the first ten miles of its course it proceeds with considerable rapidity, but before discharging itself into Loch Fleet, an arm of the sea, moves at a sluggish pace. The estuary of the Fleet is crossed, about half a mile below where it enters, by an artificial mound, over which the mail-coach running betwixt Thurso and Inverness passes daily. Under this embankment, through a flood-gate at one extremity, the tide flows and ebbs. In its usual summer state, the Fleet is a mere rivulet, but sea-trout ascend it in considerable numbers. It is visited also by a few salmon. A short way above the point to which the tide extends, lie two or three deep canal-like pools, until lately, owing to the brushwood on their banks, almost inaccessible. In these the sea-trout find harbour, and take the fly freely. The impediment spoken of has been partially removed, so that the angler can now gain a tolerable footing, and use his rod with comparative freedom. In 1850, on a bright September day, I captured, in the course of two or three hours, twenty-five finnock and sea-trout, weighing from a half to three pounds each, along with numbers of yellow



trout, out of this part of the Fleet. Had I been provided with a landing-net, and an assistant to use it, I would certainly have made a large addition to my spoils, as I had to play each fish hooked until quite exhausted, and then, taking hold of the line with my hand, haul it up the bank by main force. Not a few, and these the prime, made their escape, owing to this ungentle method of attempting to land them. In connection with the Fleet, betwixt the Mound and Little Ferry, is situated a very remarkable salmon-cast. Although forming part of the salt-water estuary, and lying at a considerable distance from the proper mouth of the river, salmon, at a certain state of the tide, may be taken in it throughout the season by means of the rod—small grilse-flies being generally employed for that purpose. The privilege of fishing in this singular cast is retained by the Duke of Sutherland for his friends while residing at Dunrobin.

The BRORA has its source in the forest of Ben Clibrig, and, after proceeding about fifteen miles, receives the Blackwater, a considerable stream which rises in Ben Ormin; and running through a long extent of deep mosses, acquires the dark tinge from which it derives its name. Shortly after the junction, the united streams pass into Loch Brora, emerging from which, after a further course of four miles, they enter the sea at the village of Brora. At certain seasons, especially during spring, the angling for salmon on this part of the river is excellent, but the assistance of rains is frequently required, as its streams quickly decrease in size. Three or four of the most inviting casts lie betwixt the cruive-dyke and the sea. Of these, the one situated immediately below the cruives is held in highest regard. Very large salmon are occasionally captured on this river. In 1850, one of thirty pounds' weight was taken with the rod by — Gunn, jun., Esq.; and in the same year, while I was at Invershin, a box containing six fish, whose united weight exceeded a hundred and twenty pounds, was forwarded from the Brora to Mr Young, the lessee of the net-fishings at its mouth. The flies found most successful in this river are dark-bodied, winged with mottled turkey-feather, and having silver tinsel; but other varieties are in use, and found killing. Loch Brora, which is about four miles long, contains sal-

mon, sea-trout, charr, and several varieties of fresh-water trout. Not far from this lake lies Loch Tubernach, a small expanse of water, at one time in high repute with the angler on account of the size and superior excellence of its trout. It has however, of late years, considerably fallen off in these respects. The reason assigned for this alleged decrease in the size and quality of trout inhabiting many of the lakes in Sutherland is the substitution throughout the country of sheep for black cattle. The habits of the latter, it is affirmed, led them in summer to frequent in herds the banks and shallows of the lochs over which they shed their droppings, and thus afforded a periodical supply of rich sustenance to the fish. With this way of accounting for the decrease in question I am not altogether satisfied, but it is entitled, I allow, to some degree of consideration.

The river HELMSDALE has a course of nearly twenty miles. It takes its rise among several lakes in the higher parts of Kildonan, and is increased during its progress by numerous streams and mountain-torrents. Its salmon-fishings are very productive. The rod, of late years, has been substituted for other modes of killing fish; and, on occasions when the weather proved favourable, excellent sport has been obtained by the lessees of its numerous casts. Of the lochs which form its sources, the largest are lochs Na Kuen, Na Clar, and Badan, all which contain trout and charr. The one most in repute, however, amongst anglers, is Loch Leam-na-Clavan, situated betwixt Ben Griam More and Ben Griam Beg. It contains trout of great size, and numerous charr. Lochs Corr and Loch-in-Ruar, along with a number of others, are also plentifully stocked with these sorts of fish. The salmon-fishings on the Helmsdale are generally, I understand, let along with the shootings on its banks, at a rent of £250, to five sportsmen, each of whom is entitled to three tickets of leave for rod-fishing on the river: consequently, fifteen rods may be employed on the casts at one time. The Brora, in 1851, was let for £200, to Mr Akroyd, with right to sub-let. In that year, before the middle of May, or commencement of the grilse-fishing, one rod had secured seventy-one clean salmon.

## CHAPTER XXIII.

## RIVERS OF CAITHNESS.

THE Langwell and Berriedale rivers, in the county of Caithness, contain salmon of fine quality. These rivers unite when about two hundred yards from the sea ; and, as is the case generally throughout Scotland, the breed of fish native to the one is rarely to be found in the other. The proprietor of the fishings is Donald Horne, Esq. of Langwell. A flood during the grilse season insures good sport on the Berriedale. Not far off is the Dunbeath river, belonging to William Sinclair, Esq. of Freswick. It is also visited, although sparingly, by salmon and sea-trout. The Wick is a dull sluggish stream, partaking of the character of the district through which it flows. A few sea-trout, and occasionally a grilse or two, visit its pools ; but, as an angling river, it is not held in very great repute. In Watten Loch, a considerable sheet of water situated betwixt Wick and Thurso, there is excellent trouting during the summer and autumn months. I fished in September 1851, in company with Mr Henderson, procurator-fiscal for the county, who has a boat on the loch, and on that occasion we captured a number of nice trout, averaging half a pound in weight. Among these was one peculiarly marked, and resembling in every respect a small sea-trout. This variety, of which specimens are frequently caught in Loch Watten, reminded me much of a similarly marked variety that, in my younger days, existed in Compensation Pond, near Edinburgh. Whether or not it does so now I cannot say ; but its origin was clearly traced to the circumstance of sea-trout

from the Esk below having had access, before the damming-up of the valley, to the upper parts of Glencorse burn. In like manner, to Loch Watten and its feeders, sea-trout at one time are known to have had access through the channel of the river Wick, which access has for many years been intercepted by the interposition of a wall or dyke, of considerable height. The silvery variety I allude to, in all probability, therefore, owes its origin to those fish, the spawn of which, by the construction of the above-mentioned barrier, were prevented from performing their migrations seaward, and have become reconciled to their fresh-water abode. The experiments made from time to time with salmon-smolts in ponds assist, in a great measure, to corroborate my views on this matter. The flies I found most successful in Loch Watten are marked in my list of loch flies as Nos. 3 and 10.

The Water of Wester, passing through a loch of the same name, flows into Sinclair Bay, at a distance of four or five miles north from Wick. It affords occasionally tolerable sea-trout fishing, but is wont to be disturbed by the nets and devices of poachers.

Sarclet loch is situated in a southerly direction from Wick, and contains yellow trout of large dimensions. Near it is the loch of Yarrows, also in good repute. In 1849, a trout five lb. in weight was taken out of it with the fly. The angling in Loch Sarclet corresponds to some extent with that on Loch Watten, with which sheet of water it is connected.

The THURSO river takes its rise in the heights of the parish of Halkirk, where it is connected with at least twenty lakes of various sizes. Of these, Lochs More and Calder are the principal ones. They all contain trout in abundance, and in Loch Calder charr are found. The length of the Thurso is about thirty miles; its greatest breadth nearly one hundred yards. Like those of the Wick rivers, its banks are totally destitute of wood. The salmon-fishings, which belong to Sir George Sinclair, Bart., are held on a long lease by Mr William Dunbar. Cruive and bag-net fishings were formerly carried on at the mouth; but these systems are now disused, and angling with the rod substituted in their place. Mr Dunbar

the tenant, is known to the public as the companion of Mr St John in his tour through Sutherland, and, it is understood, greatly assisted that gentleman during his researches in that interesting county. He is an excellent enthusiastic angler and general sportsman, as well as a collector and assorter of subjects of natural history. His museum, which I saw when at Lochinver, and which has now been transferred, I presume, to the banks of the Thurso, included splendid specimens of the predatory and aquatic birds native to the mountains and coasts of the north of Scotland.

The Thurso river, from its extent, admits of a number of rods, from eight to ten being used upon it at one and the same time ; and the casts are so portioned out by Mr D. as to prevent the interference, when angling, of one party with another. Attendants are provided to point out the salmon pools, and give all necessary assistance to the angler. The charge per month is £12, 10s. for each rod, including attendance and the use of a car, by means of which each party is conveyed to his respective fishing-ground, and taken back in the evening.

Mr D. has fitted out Brawl Castle for the especial accommodation of sportsmen ; and those frequenting it, whether for the purpose of angling or grouse-shooting, will find their quarters comfortable and convenient. The Thurso, now converted into an angling river, gives promise of taking a lead, in that character, among our Scottish streams. It is undoubtedly one of the earliest waters, with respect to clean salmon, in the island, and its capabilities in the shape of fine spawning-ground, and good shelter for fish, are very extensive. Last year, (1852,) upwards of seven hundred clean salmon and grilse were taken out of it by the rod ; and had the grilse season proved a favourable one, which, owing to the continued drought, it was far from being, probably three times that number of fish would have been captured. The most successful fisher of the season was Major Gordon Cumming, who is well known in the north as an experienced salmon-slayer ; his renown, indeed, in this respect, stands on a level with the more terrible reputation acquired by his brother the lion-hunter.

Major Gordon Cumming was so kind as to enclose for me recently a few of the ascertained killers during the spring months. They were designed by him, after a good deal of experimenting, expressly for the Thurso river. With one exception, (that of a white-top,) they have all mixed wings, in which bustard fibres, the golden pheasant tail, speckled turkey and macaw feelers, prevail. The bodies are respectively formed of various flosses ; green, olive, purple, and that tinge or colour which pervades the mussel silk, or *Pinna marina*. The lace is fretted—in the large sizes of hook, both fretted and flat, gold and silver alternately. The shouldering—blue jay, and black hackle to correspond, with olive-brown body ; grouse feather over green parrot, to correspond with olive-green body ; twitch of dyed pigs' wool, orange and red, with dyed purple hackle to correspond with purple body. One of the largest sizes of hooks having mixed wings has its body dressed with pigs' wool ; green shouldered, with blue and black hackle in the upper part, purple in the centre, and orange below ; the tip, out of which the tail-tuft projects, being formed of orange and light-blue floss silk, divided by a turn of ostrich herl. The tail-tuft of most of the flies is the golden pheasant crest-feather, with auxiliaries.

I have also been favoured by Mr Dunbar with some of his Thurso killers. They differ in the wing mixtures from Major Gordon Cumming's. In two of the patterns, ribbed feathers of the snipe are introduced as under-wings. In another, the tippet-feather of the golden pheasant is employed. The two former are shouldered with a small spotted guinea-fowl feather, and have respectively light green and olive-green floss silk bodies, with hackles to match. The other is shouldered with a small peacock neck-feather, and has its body made up of dyed pigs' wool, brown and claret-coloured. A double wrapping of tinsel, flat and round, is used in all.

The rod-fishings in the Thurso for 1853 have commenced auspiciously. Ten clean salmon were killed, and twenty-three kelts lauded, in the course of the three first days.

In the parish of Halkirk there are no fewer than twenty-four lakes, of which lochs Calder and More are the principal. Most of these are connected with the

Thurso river, and contain numbers of trout. Brawl Castle is six miles distant from Thurso. There is also a good furnished lodge near Loch More, on the shooting-grounds taken by Mr Dunbar, where four or five gentlemen can be accommodated.

The rivers and lochs in the Reay territory, which lies partly in Caithness and partly in the county of Sutherland, are in good esteem among anglers. Not far from Thurso, the Forss river empties itself into the North Sea. Its course from the tarn where it originates is upwards of seventeen miles, during which it passes through Loch Shurery, a well-reputed trouting lake. The Forss is frequented by grilse and sea-trout in considerable numbers, and good sport is occasionally obtained from its banks with the rod. Lochs Shurery, Cailm, Scirach, and Sleitill abound in trout. Those in the last-mentioned sheet of water are affirmed to be of a very superior description, large, and red-fleshed.

## CHAPTER XXIV.

## RIVERS OF THE NORTH COAST.

THE Halladale takes its rise in the boundary betwixt Reay and Kildonan, running nearly due north for about twenty miles, and falling into the Bay of Bighouse. Its average breadth is about sixty feet. As an angling river, it is superior to the Forss. Its best fishing-pools lie about three or four miles from Melvich. The names given to them, commencing with the lowermost, are as follows :—Healvaig, Conical Pool, Cargary, Fossil, Victoria, Cole, Pollewgarry or Craigton, Pollew-na-gnich or Sandy Pool, Maglayal, Altavuillen or Millburn. There are also at Forssnane several pools of a rocky description, esteemed good by the salmon-fisher. When I threw a fly over the Halladale in 1850, it was in a flooded state, and the day became far advanced before the fish seemed disposed to stir. I, however, secured two grilises out of five or six which rose in a distrustful manner at my hook. Nos. 6 and 4 of the small sizes of Tweed flies will be found very killing on this river. The lochs in repute belonging to the district are, Balligill loch, two miles from Melvich, containing trouts from a pound to four pounds in weight; Loch-na-Coorach and Loch-na-Sealg. These are connected, and lie within a hundred yards of each other. They produce trout varying from quarter of a pound to three or four pounds. Not far from them is Loch Acron, where there are abundance of small red-fleshed trout. The Strathy river flows into a bay of the same name not far from the Halladale, and affords, at times, good sea-trout fishing. A few grilises and salmon also find their



way into it. Melvich furnishes the best quarters for anglers having permission to fish these streams. The inn, which is new and commodious, is kept, so as to give high satisfaction to those frequenting it, by Mr William Telford. The tenant of Bighouse, Mr John Sellar, has the privilege of four rods on the Halladale river, along with the game of his farm. The Duke, however, retains the remainder of the angling.

The NAVER, after issuing from Loch Naver, an expanse of water seven miles long and one and a half broad, travels upwards of eighteen miles, exclusive of its windings, before entering the sea. Of this river I have formed a good opinion. With a little attention, it might be rendered one of the best in Scotland for rod-fishing. Its great extent, and ample, unfailing discharge, along with the large tracts of breeding-ground across which it flows, give it a marked superiority over one and all of the Sutherland rivers. In respect of earliness it rivals the Thurso. A communication which I have been kindly favoured with from R. Horsburgh, Esq., House of Tongue, informs me that, "in the olden time, lots of fine clean fish were taken out of the Naver in the month of December." Up to 1851, however, during the period when the bag-nets and cruives were in operation, the Naver—indeed all the rivers in the north and north-west coast of Sutherland—were subjected to great abuse. In 1845, I am informed, the Messrs Hogarth of Aberdeen obtained a seven years' lease of the whole coast and its rivers, extending from the boundaries of Caithness to the mouth of the Kirkaig river, which forms the march line betwixt Sutherland and part of Ross and Cromarty. The rent paid to his Grace the Duke of Sutherland for the entire salmon-fishings amounted to £980 ; that portion of them which stretches from Cape Wrath to Bighouse, beyond Melvich Bay, being valued at £580. The lessees, I understand, found the cruive-fishings so unproductive, that, early in the lease, they abandoned, to a great extent, that mode of capturing salmon, and relied chiefly upon their bag and trawl nets. The quantity of fish, however, decreased every year to such a degree that they considered it expedient to endeavour to get rid of their agreement, and

in 1850 applied to the Duke for this purpose. Their application was acceded to, and since that time the rivers of Sutherland have been placed, most of them, on a new footing, and, in the quarter I allude to, are let solely for angling purposes.

As the result of this change of system, I am informed, both by Mr Horsburgh and Mr MacIvor, the district factors, that salmon have greatly increased, and that all the rivers under their charge swarm with fish. In 1851, excellent sport was obtained on the Naver. Mr Allerby, as the result of one day's angling, mustered seventeen fish, and Messrs Coventry, Galloway, and others, enjoyed satisfactory success. In 1852, five rods on the Naver were taken by Mr Coventry for the sum of £250. The season, as regarded weather and state of water, was very unfavourable for angling; salmon and grilse, notwithstanding, were very plentiful in this river.

In 1850, I fished the Naver under great disadvantages. The river was much swollen—two or three feet at least above its usual height—the day far advanced, and I had no guide but mine own eye to direct me to the salmon-casts. In the course of a very short time, however, I secured a splendid salmon and beautifully formed new-run grilse. I also raised two other large fish, and killed a couple of sea-trout. Revisiting it some days after, I found the river in top flood; the day also was so wet and discouraging that, after a few casts, I was forced to make my retreat to the inn at Bettyhill of Farr, with a pannier into which only a few trout and finnock had found their way.

The Naver, during the spring months, April especially, may be relied upon by the salmon-fisher. At that season Tweed flies will be found killing throughout its course. These it has become recently the fashion to decry; but I venture to back them yet against the whole host of modern fancies, whether on the Tweed itself, the Tay, the Dee, the Spey, the Ness, the Shin, the Thurso, or the Naver. A white-top, a snipe wing, and a dun wing, always have been, and always will continue to be, the surest of our spring lures. In the summer and autumn months, these may be laid aside for Irish fabrications. A small Butcher-fly, or

something approximating to it, drew blood on the occasion I have above alluded to. Fibres from the flamingo introduced into the mixed wing are esteemed captivating on this river. The Naver salmon, "Ephemera" mentions, "are neither large nor handsome." On this matter he has been wrongly informed. Fish of sixteen pounds' weight, and upwards, are of common occurrence; and as to symmetry of form, they are excelled by none in Scotland.

In LOCH NAVER, at certain points, salmon and grilse will take the fly freely. Its principal feeder is the Mudale, which enters the loch close to Altnaharra Inn, a large, comfortable, and well-conducted house, kept by Mr H. Munro. The Naver, on its issuing from the loch, is met by the Mallart from Loch Corr. In the grilse season this river, when in trim, yields abundant sport. The Skelpich burn is another, but smaller, tributary of the Naver. It contains trout nearly a pound in weight, which are said to be peculiarly marked. The mouth of this burn is situated within three miles of Bettyhill of Farr, where there is a small inn. Langdale burn, also, which falls into the Naver about thirteen miles from the Ferry, and is connected with one or two small lochs, is of good repute as a trouting stream. Lord Ellesmere, along with the Altnaharra shootings, has a right of angling on the Naver and loch down to the mouth of the Mallart.

The Borgie river issues from Loch Slam which is immediately superintended by Lochs Craggie and Laoghal. Where it leaves Loch Slam there is a good grilse or salmon cast, and another at the head of the lake; but for a considerable distance below this, the water is shallow, and although it yields fair trouting, salmon seldom lie in it. There occur, however, several excellent stretches for salmon-fishing lower down. Not long since, the Borgie yielded annually about two thousand salmon and grilse. Common yellow trout, averaging half a pound in weight, abound in Loch Slam. In Loch Craggie, besides these, the *salmo ferox* is found. Also in Loch Laoghal this fish has its haunts; and on a favourable day, success in trolling, by one practised in the art, is a matter of certainty. Old George Ross, the Duke of Sutherland's gamekeeper at Tongue, affirms that, on one occasion, during the spawn-

ing season, he fell in with a large muster of the *feroces*, apparently hundreds, on the surface of the water in a bay on Lóch Craggie. His account was corroborated before me by other witnesses, and is held in credit throughout the district. Charr are abundant in Loch Laoghal. The Borgie, in 1851, was fished with great success by Captain Horsburgh, who also with his trolling tackle wrought wonders among the monster trout of Lochs Craggie, Slam, and Laoghal. There is a salmon-leap on the river similar to that of the Shin, where the fish are frequently seen exerting themselves in large numbers. The Kinloch water, at the head of the Kyle of Tongue, is visited by sea-trout, and occasionally by grilse. Loch Derry, from which it issues, and other lakes in connection with it, abound in yellow trout. The burn of Rhians, also, close to Tongue Inn, swarms with trout, but, owing to the brushwood on its banks, is not easily fished.

The HOPE river, from Loch Hope, has a short course of about a mile in length. It is in the course, along with the Strathmore river, which is properly its continuation, of becoming greatly improved as regards its rod-fishings. The sea-trout angling below the ferry-house has always been considered good, and occasionally large captures of grilse and salmon are made on the cruive stream; also, in Strathmore, excellent sport is sometimes obtained by the angler. By the removal of the bag-nets, the salmon-fishings of this river will no doubt regain much of their former repute. The Hon. Francis Charteris, M.P., has the right, along with the Reay deer forest, of angling in the Hope river, as far down as Dundernadilla. The remainder, with shootings, is still unlet; so, I understand, are the Borgie, Naver, and Strathy rod-fishings. With the exception of a public-house at Hilum Ferry on Loch Eriboll, situated three miles from the river Hope, there are no inns in this locality; but at most of the shepherds' houses the angler may procure a tolerable bed. The Halladale, Strathy, Naver, Borgie, and Hope rivers, also the lochs and angling in the district, are under the able and judicious management of Robert Horsburgh, Esq., residing at the House of Tongue, formerly the baronial dwelling of the lords of Reay.

The DIONARD, or GRUDIE, enters the Kyle of Durness, at a distance from Durine of about three miles. It has a course of six or seven miles, and is in good repute among rod-fishers as a salmon stream. The banks are very rugged, and the water, when swollen, highly impetuous. By far the best pools are high up, a mile or two below where it issues from Loch Dionard. In 1852, one gentleman killed no fewer than fourteen salmon and grilse, out of this river, in the course of a day. Eight of these were taken from a single pool. The rod-fishings are rented, during the current season (1853,) by the Rev. H. Magendie, for the sum of £45. When passing the Dionard, in 1850, I took a few throws below the bridge at Achintoul, and secured a fine salmon and several sea-trout. On Loch Dionard good sport is frequently obtained, and salmon are taken. There is a cave at the side of it, in which the lords of Reay used to pass the nights, when shooting in the adjoining forest, or fishing in the lake and river. Of the lochs near Durine, the most celebrated are Lochs Borralie and Crosbole, the former of which contains numbers of charr. The inn at Durine affords good accommodation during the summer months.

The KEARVAIG and SHINERY rivers are seldom visited by anglers. The former enters the sea near Cape Wrath, the latter at a remote point of the north-west coast. Sea-trout and a few grilse ascend both these streams.

## CHAPTER XXV.

## RIVERS OF THE NORTH-WEST COAST.

CLOSE to the Inn of Rhiconich, the INCHARD river discharges itself into Loch Inchard, an arm of the Atlantic. Its course, the outlet of a chain of lakes, does not exceed two miles in length, and is characterised by its rapidity. Sea-trout and salmon, more particularly the former, ascend it in considerable numbers. These, however, travel for security beyond its bed, which contains few pools, and is too shallow and turbulent to furnish desirable shelter. They resort, accordingly, to the lochs and streams higher up; and in them, more especially the upper division of the lowermost lake, Garbet Beg, excellent sport is occasionally obtained. The angler, however, requires the assistance of a stiffish breeze. On this sheet of water, on the 26th of August 1850, I killed, in the course of five hours, thirty-eight sea-trout, several of them three pounders, two salmon, and a couple of beautiful newly-run grilse, besides several loch-trout, of various dimensions. On the following day, the wind having failed, I was tied down to the river, and succeeded in killing a fine grilse, and about a dozen of sea-trout. At Rhiconich the angler will find comfortable accommodation, and a kind and attentive hostess, in Mrs Mackay, whose son Hugh I would also recommend as a useful and obliging guide.

Betwixt Durine and Rhiconich, near Gualin House, are several small lakes, containing yellow trout. Tarns of a similar description, and similarly occupied, attract the attention of the tourist throughout the west coast of Sutherlandshire. They are generally met with in chains,

and connected together by small becks, which, after heavy rains, are transformed into angry torrents. A minute investigation of their contents might lead possibly to some discoveries, but I have reason to think, in respect to most of them, that they contain merely common yellow or black trout, averaging in weight from four ounces up to a pound. A few, indeed, possess charr; and some, which I shall mention, especially in the Assynt district, trout of superior size and flavour.

Distant from Rhiconich about six miles stands the Bridge of Laxford. The Laxford has always been held among anglers in the highest repute as a salmon-river. It issues from Loch Stack, a singularly formed and highly picturesque sheet of water, emptying itself, after a course of not quite three miles, into Loch Laxford, an arm of the Atlantic. Like most of the rivers in the north, it has suffered greatly from the mode of fishing practised at the mouth. In 1835, its yield amounted to two thousand five hundred salmon and grilises, after which season a gradual falling off took place. In 1849, the produce of the whole river did not exceed seven hundred fish.

The salmon-fishings with the rod are held, along with the shootings of the district, by Lord Grosvenor. Among the pools or casts belonging to the Laxford may be enumerated—the Roy Pool, below which is Luib; Nech Beann, or the White Horse; the Fern Pool, now called Duchess; Craig Sciach, or Pool of the Rock; Pool n'Ess; Pool of the Cruives; Garden Pool; and Bridge Pool, or Crackwell.

Loch Stack, out of which the Laxford flows, is justly celebrated as an angling loch, especially for sea-trout. In this respect it is unsurpassed by any other sheet of water in Scotland. It also contains large yellow trout, probably the *salmo ferox*, and charr. Salmon, too, frequent it, and are occasionally taken at certain points. It is generally fished from the boat, and the best sport is obtained under a stiffish breeze. The loch is about three or four miles in circumference, irregularly formed, and indented with bays, some of which, owing to the shelter afforded by the surrounding hills and rocks, retain their smoothness even when the body of the lake is highly agitated.

The flies reckoned most killing on Loch Stack are of a gaudy description. Small grilse-hook, B.B. Philips, with mixed wings, light blue or orange-coloured bodies, and tips of the golden pheasant, will be found attractive, especially in rough stormy weather. On ordinary occasions, however, the description of flies which, at page 73, I have formed a list of, will, one and all of them, answer the purpose. The Laxford may be fished successfully for salmon both with Irish and Scotch patterns, sizes 9, 8, and 7, Philips. The best season for the Laxford and Loch Stack is comprised betwixt June and the 15th of September. I was indebted, in 1850, to Evander MacIvor, Esq., his Grace's factor at Scowrie, and to Lord Anson, for a couple of days' fishing on the loch and river in question. The weather and state of water were, on both occasions, far from being propitious; but I was gratified, on the whole, with my success, especially on Loch Stack, where, in the course of a few hours, without a landing-net, I captured thirty-one sea-trout, the largest upwards of five pounds' weight; several yellow trout, one of three pounds, and a charr. Of the Laxford, on the following day, I fished only the lower pools, which were much swollen. My spoils consisted of a salmon of seven or eight pounds, and about a dozen sea-trout. A recent communication which I have been kindly favoured with from Mr MacIvor, states that last year (1852) the quantity of fish on this river was enormous; but, as his Lordship came to it late, and had no angling weather while there, he could scarcely raise a fish. To satisfy his curiosity, however, he tried some of the pools with a trawl-net, and found them full of salmon.

Loch Stack is connected by one of its feeders with Loch More, a still larger expanse of water, which has seldom as yet been visited by the angler. In this loch, trout of large dimensions are known to abound; charr also inhabit its depths. A short way above it, and forming the western extremity of that chain of lakes out of which the river Shin issues, lies Loch Merkland. This lake, if not actually connected with Loch More, by a stream or discharge, is separated from it by a short tract of marshy land. Like Loch More, it has as yet been comparatively little fished



on, but is supposed, upon good grounds, to contain the *salmo ferox* and large common trout. Communication with these lakes will in future be rendered easy, by means of a road which is in the course of being completed, if not already open, betwixt Lairg and Laxford Bridge.

The Bridge of Laxford is situated at a distance of seven miles from Scowrie, where there is a comfortable inn kept by Mr Tough. On the road-side, betwixt the two points, several lakes are passed, the largest of which are Baddnabait, an isleted sheet of water, and Baddidarroch. Both contain small yellow trout. Betwixt Scowrie and Durine, and from thence to the ferries of Hilum and Tongue, no regular communication has as yet been established; but the road, although narrow, is an excellent one. Gigs or spring-carts may be procured at the different inns. From Scowrie to Assynt, and thence to Golspie, by Lairg, a conveyance carrying the mail-bags, and capable of accommodating four or five passengers, runs twice a-week. The fares are extremely moderate. In the Eddrachillis district, on the road to Kylesku, are met with the Badcall river, connected in the upper part with a chain of small lochs, in which charr are found; also the Alten-Strathan burn, from Loch Crokach; and farther on, the Altnaharra loch, out of which issues the Duart More river. All the streams I have mentioned are occasionally frequented by sea-trout.

There is excellent rod-fishing for sea-trout and grilises in the river, at the upper end of the Glendhu loch, during the months of August and September; also in the Alt-Maldie river, from Loch Leadvuan. The range of water, however, to which the fish mentioned have access in these rivers, is very limited, their progress upward being intercepted, not far from where they are discharged, by impassable rocks. At Kylesku ferry-house the angler will find tolerable accommodation, and a boat to convey him up lochs Dhu and Cuil.

LOCHS AND RIVERS OF ASSYNT.—The lakes in the parish of Assynt are upwards of two hundred in number, and vary in size from fourteen miles to one mile in circumference. Of these, the largest and most interesting is Loch Assynt, a beautiful sheet of water nearly seven miles in length, embosomed among rocks and rugged

mountains. The depth of this lake is said to be very great, exceeding in many parts a hundred fathoms. Although only one island embellishes its surface, its shape is diversified by numerous bays and promontories, which rivet the eye by the exceeding boldness of their outline. Loch Assynt contains the *salmo ferox*, and abundance of red-fleshed trout, averaging upwards of half a pound in weight. It is also frequented by salmon and sea-trout. These are sometimes taken with the rod not far from Castle Leod, at a rocky promontory stretching into the lake. I caught two sea-trout at this point in August 1850. On the same occasion, I took from the shore with the fly upwards of six dozen yellow trout, some of which weighed nearly two pounds a-piece. From the boat, with my trolling apparatus, I secured two specimens of the *ferox*, weighing respectively six and four pounds. Fish of a stone weight are, I understand, occasionally captured by the troller in this lake. When fishing with the fly from a boat, the angler, to meet with success, must throw in towards the shore—to the very edge, in fact, of the rocks or gravel. At the mouths of the several feeders, he is sure, on a favourable day, to find trout on the outlook.

Loch Assynt, at its upper extremity, receives the Loanan and Traligill rivers; also the burns of Calda and Skiag. The Loanan issues from Loch Awe, an isleted lake containing fine red-fleshed trout, from half a pound up to two pounds in weight. Its course does not exceed three or four miles. Salmon occasionally ascend it, and have been captured with the rod near Stronchrubie. The Traligill river is connected with a small loch lying in the limestone heights above Innisnadamff, at a distance of two and a half miles from the inn, called Mulach Corrie. It is here that the gillaroo, or gizzard-trout of Sir W. Jardine, is found. (See Chap. I.)

At the lower end of Loch Assynt, about a mile from its outlet, is situated a beautifully-wooded expanse of water called Loch Letteressie. Its communication with the larger lake does not extend above a few yards, and is passed over, through means of a bridge, by the road leading to Loch Inver. Loch Letteressie is supposed to contain the

*salmo ferox*. It is connected with the Gorm lochs, More and Beg, and numerous other mountain reservoirs or tarns, occupied by yellow trout of various dimensions.

The river Inver, issuing from Loch Assynt, and discharging itself, after a course of four or five miles, into Loch Inver, is well entitled to the consideration of the angler. The rod-fishings on this river—a portion of them at least—are rented, along with those of the Kirkaig, by Mr Thomas Mackenzie, innkeeper at Loch Inver. Parties residing at the inn can be accommodated with salmon-fishing at a fixed charge *per diem*. No charge, however, is made for trout-fishing, which, in the vicinity of Loch Inver, is inexhaustible. In favourable seasons the Inver river affords excellent sport to the salmon-fisher. In some places the pools or casts are narrow, rocky, and full of hazards; in others, they are easily fished. Both Scotch and Irish flies are held in esteem; among others, the Dun-wing and Butcher. The upper part of the river widens out here and there into pools of considerable breadth as well as depth. In these the common trout are very abundant, and attain to a large size. I had an opportunity, in August 1850, in company with Mr Fitzgibbon, and another gentleman, of judging of the contents of the Inver in this respect. At a single draught of the net, taken by Mr Dunbar, the late tenant of the fishings, over a very small portion of one of the pools half-way up the river, nearly a hundred yellow trout, along with a fine salmon and two or three whitlings, were brought to shore. Of the yellow trout several were two-pounders; the greater part of them fully half a pound in weight. Mr Dunbar seemed disappointed that we did not hit upon a specimen of four or five pounds' weight, of which, he has no doubt, the Inver contains many. The fish thus taken, after having been rapidly inspected and commented on, were, I may mention, set at liberty, the purpose of the experiment being merely to give us an idea of the vast numbers of trout with which the pools were plenished. In the spring of 1850, Mr Dunbar caught, when fishing for salmon on this river, a yellow trout which weighed fifteen and three-quarter pounds. The Kirkaig river, also rented by Mr Mackenzie, is rocky and impetuous, but

contains a succession of inviting salmon-pools. At a distance of about three miles from the sea, fish are arrested in their progress by a fall of considerable height, below which, from an overhanging rock, lies a cast of some repute, where, in the event of a salmon being hooked, the most skilful angler would feel somewhat at a loss. Should the fish bolt upwards, for instance, into the Fall-pool, the landing-place there, if it can be called so, cannot be reached without great danger, and it is only by the assistance of a clip or net in the hands of an experienced person that the struggler can possibly be secured; should it press downwards, there is no remedy but to use main force, and save your tackle if you can. From six to fourteen salmon and grilse have frequently been taken in the Kirkaig in the course of a day, by one rod, and the sport they afford I can easily conceive to be splendid. It is considered an earlier river than the Inver; indeed, clean salmon are said to ascend it in December, a period when, along the north-west coast of Scotland, few fish, it has been remarked, are inclined to take the fresh water.

A mile or two above the falls of Kirkaig, and at a distance of four miles across the hill from Loch Inver, stretches the sheet of water from which it issues—Fewn Loch, a fine expanse about three miles in length. It contains numbers of excellent red-fleshed trout. The *ferox*, also, or a large lake-trout resembling it in its habits, and weighing from six to ten pounds, abounds in its waters. Charr are numerous, and take the fly readily. Fewn Loch is the lowermost of a chain of lakes of considerable extent. Immediately above it lies Loch Veyattie, forming, along with Loch Fewn and the Kirkaig river, part of the boundary line betwixt Sutherland and Ross-shire, or rather Cromarty. Beyond Veyattie is the Cama Loch, which is connected at different points with Loch Urigill and Loch Boarlan. All these lakes contain large splendid trout, and are suited for trolling in. Loch Boarlan is passed by the road on which the mail-gig runs betwixt Golspie and Loch Inver. At Altnagealgach, or “The Burn of the Deceivers,” which falls into it, there is a small inn, at which the angler may procure night-quarters.

The following lakes, in the vicinity of Loch Inver, deserve mention :—

Loch Krockinaich, half a mile from Loch Inver, and connected with the sea by the Culaig burn, contains grilse, sea-trout, and yellow trout.

The Break, or trout lochs, the nearest of which is not more than one mile and a half from Loch Inver. They contain trout of large size and excellent flavour.

Loch Beannoch, situated four miles from Loch Inver, and about a mile from the road leading to Innisnadampf, contains splendid trout.

Loch Crokach, three miles from Loch Inver, on the road leading to Stoir, possesses trout of superior dimensions and unsurpassed symmetry.

Loch Roe, connected with the Break lochs, two and a half miles from Loch Inver, also on the road leading to Stoir, is frequented by sea-trout.

Loch Neach, or the Raven's loch, two miles from Loch Inver.

Loch-na-Breck More, or loch of the large trout, on the Assynt road, four miles from Loch Inver.

Clash-More Loch, seven miles from Loch Inver, not far from Stoir, contains fine trout from one pound to three pounds. These, however, are considered to take the fly shyly.

The inn at Loch Inver, kept by Mr Thomas MacKenzie, affords ample and excellent accommodation for anglers. At Innisnadampf, also, at the upper end of Loch Assynt, comfortable summer quarters are situated, and the landlord, Mr Macgregor, will be found obliging and attentive. A good boat for trolling from is kept by one Macleod, whose services in managing it may be relied on. I also recommend old Sandy M'Torquil, at Loch Inver, as a knowing guide to the streams and lochs in the vicinity.—I am indebted to Mr Horsburgh, Tongue House, and Mr MacIvor, Scowrie, for their prompt kindness in affording me much of the information relative to the salmon-fishings in their respective districts, which is embodied in this and the preceding chapter.

The EWE.—From its source in Loch Maree to its confluence with Loch Ewe, an arm of the sea, the Ewe is little more than a mile in length. Considering the shortness of its course, it is unrivalled as an angling stream for

salmon. It was of common occurrence for the late Sir Hector Mackenzie, grandfather of the present proprietor, to capture twenty fish and upwards in the course of a day, all of them new-run salmon and grilse. Many of the salmon taken with the rod on this river are of great weight, exceeding thirty pounds, and they afford sport that one accustomed to kelt-fishing has little idea of, frequently unwinding at a single burst from sixty to ninety yards of line. The sea-trout angling in July is incomparable, and by many preferred to the nobler amusement. On a favourable day, these fish may be raised at every cast. A high wind on Loch Maree has the effect, while it lasts, of knocking up every chance of sport on the river below, which, of course, it considerably augments, causing the fish to disregard every species of lure. The Gairloch salmon-fishings were let in 1836 for £150—that portion of them which is carried on by cruives, stell-nets, &c. The angling is generally rented along with the shootings.

Loch MAREE is eighteen miles in length, and one and a half in breadth. It contains salmon, trout, and charr. The scenery is magnificent, and no fewer than twenty-four wooded islets ornament the lake. There are inns at Gairloch and Poolewe, near the latter of which the river is discharged; also at Kinlochan, close to the head of Loch Maree.

The GRUINYARD river, and that which enters at the head of Loch Broom, as well as a small stream on Loch Torridon, teem occasionally with grilse and sea-trout; but they are, like many of the west-coast rivers, difficult of access, and the rod-fishing during summer is uncertain.

On the river CARRON, which discharges itself into a salt-water loch of the same name, not far from Jeantown, I recollect having a week's excellent sport among sea-trout, running from half a pound to three pounds in weight. There are several good salmon-casts on this river, but these, during the grilse season, are confined to the reach of water below the cruive-dyke at New Kelso. The removal of this obstacle, and the application of the same system as is now pursued in Sutherland, would greatly benefit the Carron as a salmon-stream. Lochs Doule and Scaven also, from which its waters proceed, might be

made to contribute more largely than they do at present to the sport of the angler.

The island of Lewis possesses several rivers where salmon are found. Of these the best is the Laxay, but the Creed, Tong, and Gress also produce this fish. The sea-trout and grilse fishing on these rivers, in the event of a summer flood, is frequently first-rate. There are numbers of lochs in Lewis and Harris, also in the Uists and Barra, most of which contain trout in great abundance, and several of them are visited by the migratory species, sea-trout and mullet. A few carp are said to exist in some of these lakes.

In the district of Kintail are two well-reputed salmon-streams, the Sheil and the Croe, running at a short distance from each other. I have fished in both, but, as neither was in trim, met with little sport. In the upper pools of the Sheil, however, I descried, looking down from the banks, numbers of salmon and grilses, and have no doubt good angling is occasionally obtained on this small river. The Loing and Elchaig also are frequented by salmon.

In the island of Skye, although there is no river vying with those of even a second-class description on the mainland, excellent sport among sea-trout and finnocks is frequently obtained. Salmon and grilse are also occasionally captured with the rod in the streams and lochs. The waters discharging themselves at Broadford Bay, Portree, Snizort, and Altivaig, are resorted to by these fish. In Harris, the rivers Lucksta, Scant, and Obbe, abound in sea-trout and salmon. Loch Bee, in the island of South Uist, contains sea-trout and mullet. The trout of Loch Tangestal in the island of Barra are justly celebrated.

## CHAPTER XXVI.

## THE AWE, AND RIVERS AND LAKES OF THE WEST COAST.

THE course of the AWE does not exceed four miles in length. Its average breadth is forty-three yards, the depth variable, from two or three feet up to twenty. It is considered one of the finest salmon-streams for rod-fishing in Scotland, and is little influenced, in comparison to most rivers, by heavy falls of rain, which often, as in the case of Tweed, try the patience of the angler. Sea-trout also ascend it in considerable numbers; and at the pass of Brandir, the celebrated *salmo ferox* descends to spawn, entering for this purpose the streams immediately below the outlet of Loch Awe. This river is the only one in Scotland that escapes in a lateral direction from its parent reservoir.

The length of LOCH AWE has been variously estimated. It certainly exceeds twenty-four, and is under thirty miles; its average breadth not being a mile, although in some places it expands into a width of three miles. Its depth, in several parts, is seventy fathoms. It contains a great variety of fish—salmon, the *ferox*, common trout, pike, perch, charr, along with two or three species of sea-trout. The pike are considered to be of recent importation, and their ravages among the smaller and more delicate kinds of fish have been, of late years, very considerable. The *salmo ferox* has become scarce, and a good specimen can only be obtained after much perseverance. The charr frequent the extreme end of the lake, where the outlet is said at one time to have been. The salmon generally push upwards towards the mouth of the Urchay, but also



make their resorts in the bay and creeks, where rocks and shelter-places are abundant: as for the native trout, they are found in various parts of the loch, according to the situation of the feeding-grounds.

The principal feeder of Loch Awe—indeed, the only one of any note—is the Urchay, which issues from a small lake in the upland part of its glen, and, after a course of sixteen miles, empties itself into its larger depôt, not far from Caolchurn Castle. It is a favourite resort of salmon, and there are several good pools for the rod close to the inn at Dalmally, which, I believe, are rented by the landlord for the convenience of those frequenting his house. Besides Dalmally, the inns at Cladish, Portsonachon, and Bunaw, afford excellent accommodation.

The salmon and trout fishings in the parish of Glenurchy yielded, in 1843, about £300 per annum. These include the Awe fishings, or at least the larger part of them, as well as those of the Urchay and lake.

I have already, in my chapter on salmon-flies, described the lures of this description used in the Urchay and river Awe, and have introduced into my lists of favourites, under the name of the Black Dragon, a hook originally adapted with killing effect to the latter river, when in a reduced state: I have here only to mention that the merit of its contrivance is due to Colonel Robertson, an excellent and indefatigable salmon-fisher, who is well acquainted with the rivers in that quarter, and rented, moreover, as a sportsman, the Ewe in Ross-shire, during a course of several years.

In respect to the trouting-flies used in Loch Awe, I am informed by Professor Wilson, who fished there in 1845 and '46 with considerable success, that he found green bodies on all occasions attractive, but that one of the most killing flies is winged with mottled feathers taken from the bustard, the upper part of its body formed of blue, and the lower of orange dubbing: a light brown hackle, carried well down towards the bend of the hook, imitates the legs. Tinsel and a tail-tuft also are introduced, the latter consisting of two or three fibres from the tippet of the golden pheasant.

The EWE is a stream of considerable size, but situated in a lonely, almost inaccessible, district of country: on

this account it is little frequented by anglers, but in its season—that is, during the months of July and August—should the weather prove favourable, it affords excellent sport, both among sea-trout and grilses. At Dalness there is a pool of great depth, headed by a waterfall, above which salmon seldom or never ascend; but they may be perceived at certain seasons occupying the bed of the river underneath in great numbers, and at a depth of several fathoms. The course of this stream exceeds sixteen miles.

It would be impossible, within reasonable limits, to give an outline of the various streams and lochs in Argyllshire; nor, in reference to the former, is the task required. They all partake much of the same character, both as respects their contents and the nature of the channels along which they move. They are dependent also, the whole of them, upon the state of the weather, and require, in order to induce the migratory *salmonidæ* to frequent them, the occurrence of floods and certain positions of wind and tide.

Of these (the rivers or streams) I shall only mention a few by name, pointing out the localities or districts they belong to.

Falling into Loch Etive, besides the Etive, are the Kinlas, Liver, Noe, and Esragans, greater and lesser. Into Loch Creran are discharged the Creran, with its tributary the Ure, the Buie, Tendal, and Dergan. Near Oban runs the Euchar from Loch Scamadale, the Oude from Loch Trallaig, &c. There are numerous lochs from within one to four miles of Oban, amply stocked with trout, which vary in quality, as the bottom happens to be moss or gravel. The finest fish are found in a small lake near Dunstaffnage, called Donolly Beg Loch. These trout are all from three-quarters to one and a half pound in weight, very short, thick, and quite red in the flesh. It communicates with the sea, but no white trout frequent it. The next worthy of mention is Loch Nell, about three miles east of Oban. It is nearly six miles round, and communicates with Loch Feochan, an arm of the sea, by a small river called the Clugh. The trout here are very large: frequently six and eight pounds' weight. There are also plenty of salmon, and shoals of small sea-trout, called, in Argyllshire, *banochs*. In this loch there are, besides, numbers

of charr. The ground around it belongs to two different proprietors; one allows fishing, the other not; so that, with a boat, any part of the lake may be angled in. Loch Scamadale also communicates with the sea by the water of Euchar, a rocky impetuous stream. It is about the size of Loch Nell, but contains more salmon and plenty of sea-trout. Yellow trout have been caught five or six pounds' weight, but average much less. The fishings are let: rod-fishers, however, meet with no interruption.

In the black lakes, three miles from Oban, sea-trout abound. Four or five dozen, averaging three-quarters of a pound, have frequently been taken in the course of a day. They contain no salmon, but swarm with small trout. A boat is necessary. On the island of Lismore, opposite Oban, there is a good fishing lake called Killyheeran. Its trout are like those of Loch Leven, fat and red. It has no communication with the sea.

At the foot of the Euchar and the Oude are salmon-fishings: the former pays about £40 of rent, the latter £30.

In the neighbourhood of Kilmun is the Eachaig, issuing from Loch Eck, and emptying itself, after a course of four miles, into the Holy Loch. This river, from the facility with which it is approached, is much fished. The grilises and sea-trout that ascend it are pretty numerous. Small gaudy flies, like those used on the west coast of Ireland, seem the favourites. Loch Eck is about seven miles in length, and, among other fishes, contains the *gwyniad* or *salmo lavaretus*, termed there the *powan* or fresh-water herring. It also possesses a fish, said to be peculiar to itself, and supposed to have been planted by the monks of old, who held considerable possessions in that district. The name given to it is the *goldie*; in length it is only four or five inches, and when taken out of the water has a rich golden colour, which undergoes a succession of beautiful hues before the fish expires. Lifted up in the hand, it appears almost transparent, and its structure is peculiarly delicate. A considerable number of gold and silver fishes were, some years ago, introduced into Loch Eck by Mr Wilsone of Benmore. The fishings on the Eachaig belong to Mr Campbell of Monzie.

In the district of Appin are the Coe, Coinich, Duror, Laroeh, and Leven, abounding, in their season, with sal-

mon and white trout. The fresh-water trout of all these streams are small. Near Inverary are the Ary and Shira waters, of the same character ; but there are several lakes in the vicinity—those, for instance, on the hill of Killian—which produce good trout. Near Ardtornish, in the Morvern district, lies Loch Arrienhas, which communicates, through means of the Garavon, or rough river, with Loch Aline, a salt-water bay, forming part of the sound of Mull. Loch Arrienhas abounds in sea-trout, of which from two to three dozen may be taken in the course of a few hours, averaging in weight from three-quarters to two pounds.

In the districts of Morvern, Sunart, Ardgour, and Ardnamurchan, also throughout Knapdale and Cowal, there are numerous streams and lochs abounding in trout and sea-trout, and occasionally visited by salmon. Cautyre is watered by the rivers Carradale, Torisdale, Saddell, Cressaig, Sunadale, Skipness, and Claonaig. Of these, the Carradale, as a salmon stream, is the best reputed. In Loch-na-Break, trout weighing from two to four pounds, and of excellent quality, are found.

The inns in Argyllshire are numerous ; but the angler from the south must not expect the mountain mile to resemble that of the level turnpike ; and a loch or river, although reported and mapped out as situated in the vicinity of a good station, is not always, he will find, to be reached in the course of a few strides.

The LOCHY, which belongs to the county of Inverness, issues by a new channel cut for it from Loch Lochy, and meets the Spean at Mucomre Bridge, a short way farther on. On reaching Gearlochy, the combined streams once more return to their natural bed, and, after running a course of nearly eight miles, fall into the sea above Fortwilliam, where the Nevis river also discharges its waters. Lochy was at one time in good repute for its rod-fishings, and still, in respect to sea-trout, maintains its character. In 1842, the fishings were rented at £320 per annum. They belong to Lord Abinger. I have, on two or three occasions, fished this river with the trouting-rod, and met with excellent sport.

The Spean, its principal tributary, descends from Loch Laggan, and is augmented in its course by the Gulbin, Treig from Lochtreig and Ruiag waters. Before entering

Loch Laggan it is termed the Pattag river. There are few fresh-water trout in the lower portions of Spean, but where it leaves the lake these are very numerous, and some of them of large size. Salmon ascend to within eight miles of Loch Laggan, and were the rock which obstructs their further progress removed, the range of spawning-ground would, in all probability, become widely increased, and the Pattag converted into an excellent salmon-river. The trout of Loch Laggan are many of them large, and peculiar in the external colour. I have known them to be taken there above eight pounds in weight, but it is not unlikely that some of still greater size haunt its feeding-grounds. This sheet of water is eight miles in length, and upwards of one in breadth. The fishings, I understand, are rented along with the shootings by the Marquis of Abercorn. I am informed that this year (1853) the spring-fishings on the Lochy, as far as they have been prosecuted, have proved very successful. Loch Lochy is about ten miles long, and contains salmon and trout. Connected with it, by a picturesque valley, is Loch Arkaig, a sheet of water nearly sixteen miles in length, which at one time, before the construction of the Caledonian Canal, abounded in salmon. Lochs Fad and Ascog, in the island of Bute, contain pike and perch. In Greenan Loch good trout are found. In the Island of Arran, on Loch Jorsa, there is superior angling for salmon; and on Loch Tanna, excellent trouting. At Ardlussa in Jura, there is a good stream for sea-trout.

## CHAPTER XXVII.

## THE CLYDE, AND STREAMS OF THE SOUTH-WEST.

ONE of the sources of the CLYDE is traceable to the same ridge of mountains which gives origin to the Tweed and Annan ; but its larger source is the rivulet of Crossburn, from Queensberry Hill, which is increased by the Daer water, and afterwards joined by the Clyde burn, or little Clyde. Its after-tributaries are the Elvan, Midloch, Camps, Glengonner, Duneaton, Garff, Culter, the Medwins North and South, Douglas, Mouse, Nethan, Dalserf, Avon, and South, North, and Rotten Calder. All of these streams contain trout ; some of them, such as Duneaton, Elvan, and Glengonner waters, in great abundance. In the main river they are occasionally caught of large size. Below the fall at Stonebyres, Clyde is still visited by salmon ; but there are few or no sea-trout that ascend its current, so far up even as Hamilton. Pike and perch, however, are common ; and the roach or braize is occasionally taken in the lower parts of the river. The salmon-fishings in the parish of Govan, below Glasgow, were let, for the first time, upwards of fifty years ago, for the sum of £30. Immediately afterwards, the rent rose until it reached £326 annually ; but since 1812, it has greatly fallen, and at present does not exceed £60 per annum. It is a singular circumstance, that salmon and their fry have occasionally been taken in the upper parts of Clyde, above its loftiest falls, which, being eighty feet in height, it is utterly impossible for fish of any kind to surmount. The fact is accounted for in this way. After passing Tinto Hill, from the top of which there is a splendid view of its windings, the bed of the Clyde

approaches to a level with that of the Biggar water, which is close at hand, and discharges itself into the Tweed. On the occasion of a large flood, the two streams become connected, and the Clyde actually pours a portion of its waters into one of the tributaries of Tweed, which is accessible to, and frequented in the winter season by salmon, or rather large bull-trout, mistaken evidently for the salmon proper. There is also a similar connection between the two rivers farther down, at the respective sources of the Medwin and Tarth waters. The finest portions of the Clyde for the angler are situated above and below Lamington, where the banks are open and free of wood. Not only are the trout in this part of the river abundant, but their quality is very superior, and the colour of the flesh red. They have been captured here nearly two feet in length. The lochs of Lanarkshire are few, and in point of size insignificant. The Crane loch lies in a moorland district, in the parish of Dunsyre, and abounds with pike and perch. It is connected with one of the Medwins, which contains red trout of considerable weight and a few pike. The White Loch, near the village of Carnwath, produces perch. There are also Lang Loch, not far from Lanark, and Bishop's Loch, Woodend, &c., in the parish of Monkland; but the largest expanse of water in this shire is the reservoir for supplying the Forth, Clyde, and Monkland canals, which covers an expanse of three hundred acres, and contains perch and trout—the former in great abundance. Near it also is a small lake, termed the Lily Loch, producing trout and charr.

The average velocity of the Clyde is from one to three miles per hour. At five miles above Glasgow, its breadth is from two hundred to two hundred and fifty feet. Below this city it receives, opposite the village of Govan, the Kelvin water and the streams of Dumbartonshire and Renfrewshire. The Kelvin water is occasionally frequented by salmon, and contains trout, pike, perch, and roach.

The LEVEN issues from Loch Lomond, and after a course of seven or eight miles falls into the Firth of Clyde at Dumbarton. It contains salmon, sea-trout, and several of the fresh-water species of fish. The fishings belong partly to Sir James Colquhoun, of Luss, and partly to the corporation of Dumbarton. The latter were let not long ago for £281 per annum.

Loch Lomond is twenty-four miles in length, and, where broadest, eight in width. It contains all the fish alluded to by Smollett, in his celebrated Ode to the Leven Water, with the addition of the *gwyniad*, *prosen*, or fresh-water herring. Its principal feeders are the Glenfalloch, Inveruglas, Douglas, Luss, Finlass, and Fruin; and on the Stirlingshire side, the Endrick, and a small stream from Loch Arklet. In all these waters there are numbers of small trout. I have killed as many as ten or twelve dozen on a forenoon in the Glenfalloch. Endrick contains pike, perch, and roach, or, as they are there termed, *braize*. A few sea-trout also ascend from the lake during floods. Besides Loch Lomond, there are several small lochs situated in the county of Dumbarton, the largest of which is Loch Sloy, near Arrochar. These, or most of them, contain trout.

The principal streams discharging themselves into the Clyde, in Renfrewshire, are the Carts, Black and White. The former has its sources in Castle Semple Loch, and receives, as its largest tributary, the Gryffe river, which is increased higher up by the Locher and other streams. The Black Cart contains fine pike, perch, and *braize*, but its trout are on the decrease. Salmon also ascend it, but not in great numbers.

The WHITE CART rises in the moors of Eaglesham. It is supplied in its course by the Kevock burn, the Earn water, Auldhouse burn, and Levern water. Near its sources are a number of small lakes, Loch Goin, Brother Loch, Binnend, Black Loch, Long Loch, Knock, &c. Most of these contain excellent trout, and several of them charr. The charr, (*salmo salvelinus*,) I may here mention, are affirmed, in the *Statistical Account of Scotland*, to have been introduced from the lakes of Mearns and Eaglesham into the Avon, a tributary of the Clyde, near Hamilton, and still to exist there, under the name of the Duchess Anne trout. They are said to attain the length of twelve inches. In Castle Semple Loch are found pike and perch; also in Loch Libo and Hairlaw reservoir.

The value of the salmon-fishings in Renfrewshire is considerable. Those on the Firth belong exclusively to the burgh of Renfrew, and the average amount of rent drawn from them annually, betwixt the years 1814 and 1834,



was no less than £4199, 1s. ; about fifty years ago it averaged little more than one-fourth of the above-mentioned sum.

The GARNOCK takes its rise not far from the lochs of Kilbirnie and Castle Semple, on the confines of Renfrewshire, and, after receiving accessions from the Rye, Caaf, Dusk, and Lugton waters, discharges itself into the sea near Irvine. Salmon ascend this river during close-time, and occasionally in the open season. It contained, at one time, abundance of trout, both sea and fresh-water, but these have, of late years, greatly fallen off in quantity. The Dusk was esteemed also a good angling stream. In Kilbirnie Loch there are trout, pike, and perch. The Rye and Caaf burns are much poached by persons using nets and quicklime.

The IRVINE is but an indifferent fishing-stream ; but one of its tributaries, the Cessnock, is in good repute, although greatly injured by poaching.

The AYR pursues a course of above thirty miles. Near its rise it is increased by the Garpel and Greenock waters, and, farther down, by the Lugar and Coyl. It contains yellow trout, and salmon were formerly caught there in great abundance ; but the angling throughout its course is now reckoned very indifferent, in comparison at least to what it once was. Some of the lochs near which it runs contain pike and perch.

The course of the DOON, from Loch Doon, is upwards of eighteen miles. As an angling river it is superior to the Ayr water, and is more frequented than the other by salmon and sea-trout. It also contains pike and a good number of yellow trout. Its channel, in the upper part of its course, is rugged and narrow. Below Berbeth it expands into a small lake, after which, as far down as Patna, it runs sluggishly for five or six miles, when it again assumes a bold picturesque appearance, and preserves these features until discharging itself into the sea, two miles to the west of Ayr.

Loch Doon, out of which this river glides, is upwards of six miles in length, and in breadth one mile. It is much frequented by anglers, and contains abundance of trout. In the parish of Straiton, where it is partly situated, there are no fewer than twenty-six lakes. Upon three of these,

Lochs Braden, Dercleugh, and Finlas, boats are kept for angling.

The Doon salmon-fishings belong to the Marquis of Ailsa; those of the Ayr to Mr Oswald of Auchincruive. The former were lately rented for £235, the latter for £45 annually. In the loch of Martnaham are found pike and perch; and in Loch Fergus, near the burgh of Ayr, pike.

The GIRVAN rises on the hills of Barr and Straiton. In favourable seasons salmon ascend it. One of its sources, the Spalander loch, contains charr and abundance of good trout. Its extent is about forty-five acres. Besides it are several other expanses of water connected with the Girvan, most of which produce trout and other fishes.

The STINCHAR is the only remaining water of note in the county of Ayr. Its sources lie among the lochs in Barr parish, and the length of its channel is about thirty miles. The salmon-fisheries on this river draw a rent of about £210 per annum. The principal tributaries of Stinchar are the Dusk, Muck, and Tig. There are several lakes in Colmonell parish, the largest of which are Lochs Dornal and Maberry: the latter is connected with the Bladenoch river, in Wigtownshire.

## CHAPTER XXVIII.

## THE RIVERS OF THE SOLWAY FIRTH.

THE NITH rises in the parish of New Cumnock, in Ayrshire, where it receives the Afton water, and shortly after enters Dumfriesshire. During its course, it is successively swelled by the Euchar, Minnick, Carron, Skar, Duncow, and Cluden, the last-mentioned being the largest of its tributaries. Including its windings, the Nith is nearly one hundred miles in length. As an angling river, it is very inferior to any other of its size in Scotland. Neither the common trout nor salmon are at all plentiful. Compared with those in Tweed, they bear the proportion of about one to twenty. In the upper parts of the river and its several feeders, the fresh-water trout are rather more abundant; and throughout its course, at the proper season, there is a fair sprinkling of herlings. The best casts for salmon on the Nith extend from Friar's Carse to Drumlanrig; and of these the Forest Head, the Porter's Hole, the Red Brow, the Scaur Foot, the Boat Pool, the Loch Wharry, and the Drumlanrig streams, from Thornhill Bridge upwards, may be enumerated. There are two most excellent inns at Thornhill, from which access to all these casts is easy. The following are the favourite salmon-flies:—First—Body, next the head of the hook one-eighth of an inch yellow pig's wool; next that, a quarter of an inch light-brown wool; above that, half an inch harl of peacock's feather; head, very dark-brown or black wool; hackle red, black at top; tarnished (not bright) gold twist; wings, red turkey, with yellow or white tip; under-wings, grey turkey or teal, or pea-hen. This is the most general and deadly fly for summer. Second—Body, same as above; wings,

red gledd, with under-wings of bar-gledd. This is also good during summer. Third—Body, same as above ; wings, pea-hen and grey turkey mixed. This is the usual fly for autumn.

The CLUDEN, its largest tributary, is of a very different character from the Nith, and in good esteem among rod-fishers. It is ascended by salmon, grilse, sea-trout, and herlings, and contains, along with large-sized yellow trout, an occasional pike. The salmon of Cluden are of quite a distinct variety from those of the main river, being thicker and shorter in the body, and much shorter in the head. Its waters being of a mossy nature, the fish entering it quickly grow dark in the external colour. The rents of the salmon-fisheries near Dumfries amount to about £500 a-year. Those of the whole county do not exceed £1400.

The ANNAN, which has its sources in the same hill with Tweed and Clyde, is met below Moffat by the Evan and Moffat waters, at a height of about three hundred and fifty feet above the sea-level. As an angling stream, it is much superior to both the Nith and Esk rivers. The common trout of this river attain to a large size ; and although the average weight is not above half a pound, they have been caught as heavy as five or six pounds : my friend, George Graham Bell, Esq. of Castle O'er, has frequently, with the minnow, when the streams were clear and small, taken an immense pannierful of large trout from the Annan water. It is ascended, during July and August, by the herling in considerable numbers, but not so freely as it would be, were the small mesh-nets completely set aside. Pike are tolerably abundant in the lower parts of the river. Moffat water, one of the upper tributaries already mentioned, is connected by the Grey Mare's Tail burn with Loch Skene, which abounds in nice trout, averaging in weight half a pound. After the Moffat and Evan, Annan receives the Wamphray, Kinnel, Dryfe, Milk, and Mien waters. Not far from where the Dryfe and Kinnel discharge themselves, lie the Lochmaben lochs, nine in number. In the Castle loch, which is the largest, there are no fewer than fifteen distinct species of fish. Among these are two species, so termed, of loch trout, one weighing from twelve to fourteen pounds, and the other from two to five pounds.

There are also bream, roach, chub, pike, perch, and the vendace. Pike have been caught here weighing thirty-five pounds. The fishings, except from Mount Annan downwards, are all in the hands of the proprietors. The best casts for the rod are on the estates of Jardine Hall, Hal-leath, Kirkwood, Murraythwaite, Castle-Milk, and Hod-dam Castle. The same general character of fly is used here as on Nith. There is an excellent inn (King's Arms) at Lockerby, from which the best casts can easily be reached.

The Vendace in the Castle loch, Lochmaben, are fished for once a-year by the Vendace Club, an association of Dumfriesshire gentlemen. The two fisheries at the mouth of the Annan, belonging to Mr Irvine of Newbie and the burgh, are let for nearly £600 per annum.

The Esk is formed by the union of the Black and White Esks, at a place called the King's Pool, below Bailliehill. These rivers have their sources in Eskdale-muir parish, and receive, during their conjoined progress to the head of the Solway Firth, numerous tributaries. The principal of these are, the Meggat, the Ewes, Wauchope burn, Tarras water, Liddel, Glenzier, and Line rivers, the latter two belonging properly to Cumberland. The common trout of the Esk seldom exceed half a pound in weight, and are by no means abundant below the junction of the two branches. A few salmon ascend it, along with a sprinkling of sea-trout and herlings. Of its tributaries, the Liddel is in good esteem with the angler, but the trout found there do not excel in size. There are a few chub, called *skellies*, in the Esk; the river-trout obtain the name of *eldrins*, and the herlings, during close-time, are termed *bills*. One of the most enthusiastic and able anglers in Eskdale is George Graham Bell, Esq., advocate, under whose skilful control many a salmon has been forced to bite the sod. The course of the Esk, from its sources in Eskdale Moor to the Solway Firth, extends thirty-eight miles.

The DEE, or DEVA of the Romans, rises from Loch Dee, in the parish of Minnigaff, in Kirkcudbright, and, after running a course of twenty-two miles, joins the Ken, a stream larger than itself. The name of Dee, however, is

still retained; and the combined waters proceed in the same channel, passing through the lower part of Loch Ken to the Solway Firth, a further course of nearly twenty miles. The Dee contains salmon, sea-trout, river-trout, pike, and perch. Its salmon-fishings belong to Mr Murray of Broughton, and are considered valuable, the rental not long ago exceeding £700. The cruive, or what is locally termed the doach system of capturing salmon, is there pursued, much, of course, to the detriment of the upper holders of fishings. In some parts of the river, salmon are taken in great numbers by what is termed the shoulder-net—a contrivance similar to the pout-net of Tweed, only on a larger scale. A few years ago, thirty-five salmon were brought out at a single draught by this means; and in July 1836, (according to a statement made by the Rev. Mr Williamson, in the *New Statistical Account*,) the same individual who achieved the above feat took, in the course of an afternoon, no fewer than three hundred and fifteen grilse. The report drawn out by Mr Williamson regarding the parish of Tongland, in the Stewartry of Kirkcudbright, will be found highly interesting to the angler.

The bull-trout is common on the Dee, where it attains the weight sometimes of twenty pounds.

The KEN takes its rise in the northern part of the Stewartry, and joins the Deugh on entering Kells parish. Several miles farther down, below New Galloway, it expands into a lake upwards of five miles in length, and from one-half to three-quarters of a mile in breadth. In this sheet of water, the largest pike known to have been killed in Scotland was captured, with rod and fly, by John Murray, gamekeeper to the grandfather of the present Viscount Kenmure. The head of this fish, which weighed seventy-two pounds, may be seen in Kenmure Castle, and, contrasted with one of more common, but still large dimensions, which is placed near it, bears striking evidence as to the prodigiousness of the monster it belonged to. Near Loch Ken, in the parishes of Balmaghie and Cross-michael, are several lochs—Grannoch, Dornal, Lochinbreck, Glentoo, Roan, &c. All these, with the exception of Lochinbreck, which abounds in trout, produce pike and

perch. In the parish of Girthon there is another loch, of the name of Grannoch or Greanoch, which contains charr in abundance. These, it appears, are only to be taken with the net, and in the spawning season, when they frequent the shallows. The lochs of Balnacellan (several of which are connected by small runs with the Ken and Loch Ken) are in good repute among anglers. The one producing the largest and finest trout is Loch Brack, where, in 1840, two were caught weighing respectively five and seven pounds. Besides it, Barscobe, Loch Skae, and Houie, deserve to be mentioned. Bull-trout ascend the Garple burn in the spawning season.

The fishings of the river CREE belong principally to the Earl of Galloway. In the neighbourhood of Newton-Stewart they are of considerable value—about £600 per annum, including stake-nets in the estuary. Higher up, the river belongs entirely to his lordship, and nets are not allowed to be used ; consequently, the Cree is occasionally a first-rate stream for salmon, or rather grilse fishing ; but a great deal depends upon its being frequently flooded at the proper season—that is, from the middle of June until the month of August. The best part of the river for angling lies about ten miles above Newton-Stewart, at or near the junction of the Cree and Minnick, the latter of which is much the larger stream, and affords the better fly-fishing. Few sea-trout ascend the Cree beyond Newton-Stewart, and salmon are the only fish it contains worth mentioning, the yellow trout being generally of small size, and, except near the sources of the river, not very numerous. The smelt or sperling, a very delicate little fish, is taken in the brackish water, at the mouth. The fly found most suitable for the Cree is formed of the brown feather on the back of the mallard's wing, brown hackle over orange dubbing, with a little blue ditto at the shoulder, forming the legs ; the tail-tuft being of lemon-coloured worsted, along with a couple of fibres from same feather as the wing. The size of the hook is, of course, regulated by the size and colour of the river.

The FLEET is an insignificant stream, seldom frequented by salmon ; and the sea-trout, which a few years ago were pretty abundant, have been prevented from ascending the

river by a high embankment, erected for the purpose of raising the water to a sufficient level for a cotton-mill wheel at Gatehouse, a village near its mouth. A few miles up among the hills, there are abundance of very small yellow trout, generally caught by worm-bait.

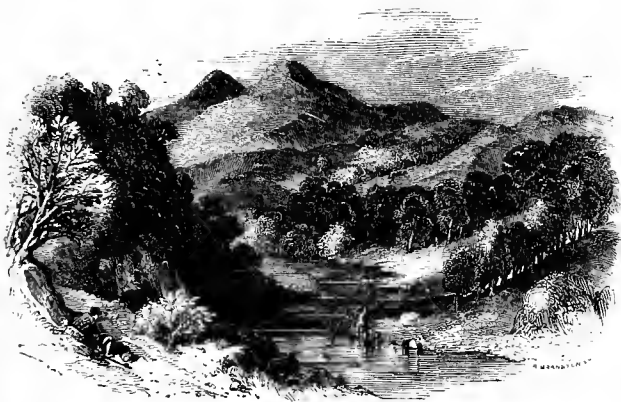
The URR is about equal to the Fleet in size, and sea-trout ascend it in considerable numbers; but in dry seasons, the quantity of water is so small as to admit of their being easily taken by poachers. In the northern and mountainous parts of the Stewartry, very fine trout are to be met with in lochs frequented by pike; but they are, generally speaking, not numerous; and where there are no pike, the trout are very small. Loch Dee, Loch Trool, Loch Erroch, Lochinvar, and Loch Kinder are the best; but none of these at all equal the lochs in the north of Scotland. Yellow trout, from four to five pounds' weight, have been caught frequently in Lochs Dee and Trool, and in the former, pike above twenty pounds; but the ordinary weight is much less.

In Wigtownshire, the LUCE and BLADENOCH are the only angling streams, and neither is entitled to the character of a good one, whether for salmon or yellow trout. The Luce is a very late river for salmon, which are seldom to be met with before August, and even then not in considerable numbers, though pretty large—sometimes from fifteen to twenty pounds' weight. It is generally, however, well stocked with sea-trout, weighing as much as three or four pounds each. These afford good sport to the angler, and ascend the river about eight miles, as far up as Darnegap, where is a waterfall that obstructs their further progress. The fishings of the Luce belong exclusively to Sir James Dalrymple Hay, Bart., of Park Place, and are generally reserved for fly-fishing. The lochs of Wigtownshire principally contain pike, in some instances perch and roach. Good trout are sometimes caught in Loch Eldrig in Mochrum, of about one or two pounds; but they are not plentiful.

The salmon of the DEE are held in high estimation. Besides Mr Murray of Broughton, the Earl of Selkirk and burgh of Kirkcudbright possess fishings in this river; these are rented for about £230. The pearl-mussel is very plentiful in the Dee.



I may mention that the angling in many of the rivers and lochs of Galloway is held in reservation, and that permission is required from the proprietors of the lands and fishings, in order to wield the rod over them. Inns are situated in various parts of the Stewartry and its neighbouring shire, but chiefly in or near to small towns or villages ; such as New Galloway on the Ken, Castle-Douglas near the Dee, and Newton-Stewart on the Cree.



THE END.



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